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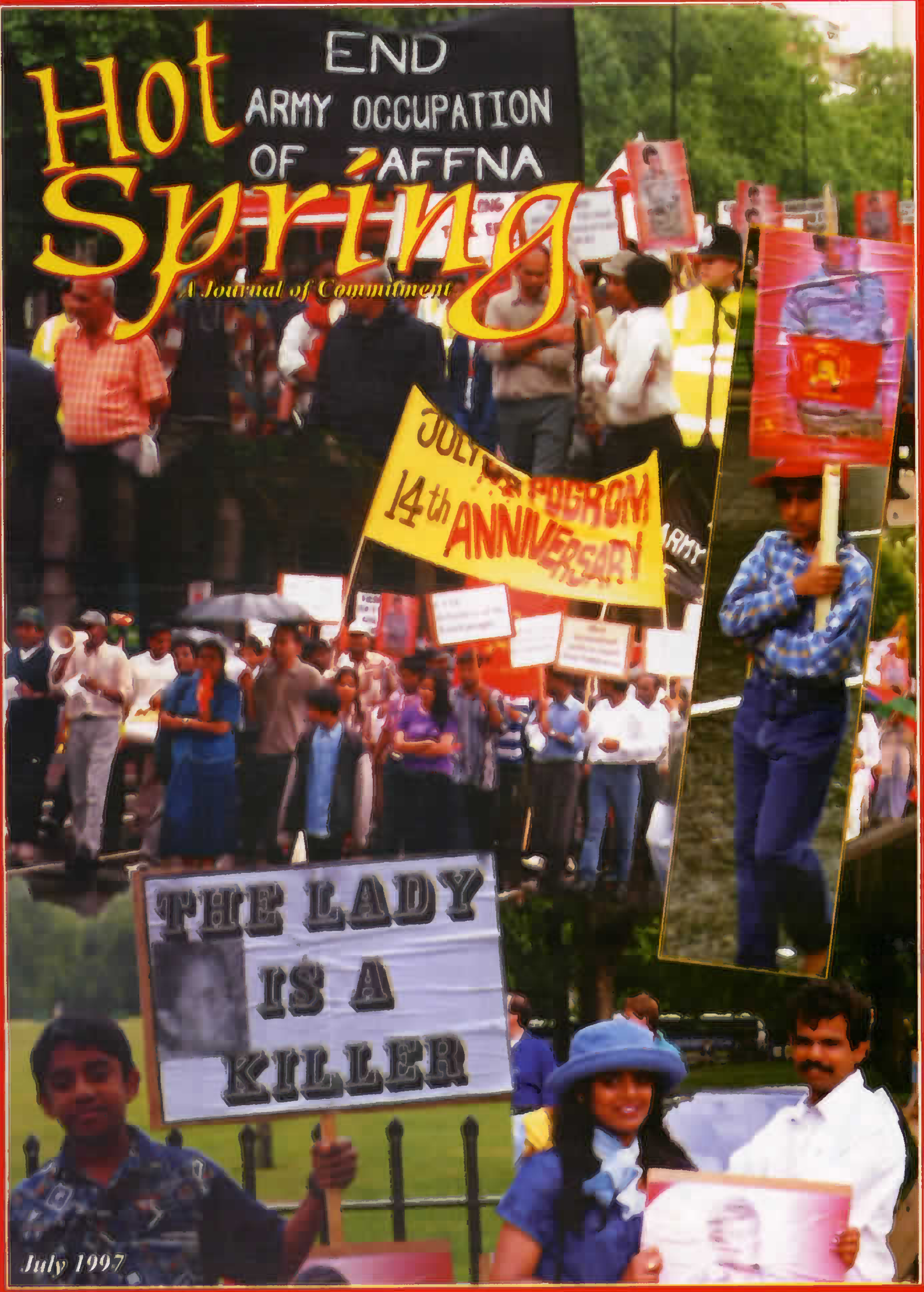
Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment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ARMY OCCUPATION
OF JAFFNA
JULY POGROM
14th ANNIVERSARY
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July 1997

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Hot Spring
A Journal of commitment
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Comment

Braggarts and Comedians all !

Sri Lankan military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe must be a decent bloke as far as his family is concerned, but unfortunately he is a compulsive braggart. We are told that behind his back some Colombo Pressmen refer to him as "Boru"singhe (Boru in Sinhala meaning Lie), but neverthless they quote whatever that comes out of his mouth very faithfully, and transmit it to the big, wide world, where job-weary sub-editors go for easy headlines such as TIGERS IN SRI LANKA, ON THE RUN, and make a beeline to the nearest bar. The kind of words that originated in Brigadier Boru's fertile brain, and solemnly dished out by Reuters and AFP who are starved of otherwise decent copy, assumes at the other end, the form of INFORMATION ! Tragic !

Ranjan Wijeratne

This is what Brigadier B. is reported by Reuters to have said at a "news conference" in Colombo on July 24:

"The LTTE are on the final run. They will keep on running and we will keep pushing them northwards... There is nothing left there (in the Vanni) except that road, and once we take it, there is no place for them to run but to the east and jump into the sea".

Valuable information . Powerful verbal stuff ! Which only proves that when it comes to shooting, the Brigadier shoots best from the mouth. Not that his boss, War Minister "General" Ratwatte is any less skilful in the art. What all this means is , there is a close connection between reverses in war and the tendency to brag. So, in fairness to both, this is not a congenital problem. It has everything to do with the office they hold. For example, the late Ranjan Wijeratne, who held the same post of Minister of War under President Premadasa was even better an entertainer than "General" R. Let us go back seven years, and see what that man told INDIA TODAY (July 15, 1990):

Q: By when will you take control of the east and north ?

A: It all depends on the LTTE's inefficiency. It will take time to get to the north first as we want to consolidate the east first. But we are at it. I finished the JVP. I will finish the LTTE.

Q: Aren't you underestimating the LTTE ?

A: The IPKF got rid of the hardcore elements. What is left is the baby brigade of young boys and girls. They will wet their pants when they meet my armed forces.

That of course was superb stuff ! Even the War Minister under Jayewardene, the late Athulathmudali used to talk about "smashing of heads", but as supreme entertainer, he was no patch on the late Ranjan Wijeratne. Brigadier B. shows promise, particularly that one about the LTTE jumping into the sea, but that thing about the LTTE baby brigade wetting their pants (remember Thandikulam, June 9) still remains to the late Ranjan's credit, immortal stuff.

S.S

What They Say

"After the rout of 1977 the SLFP became an embarassment. Realising that the days of Mrs.Bandaranaike were numbered, her children and son-in-law fought amongst themselves for the party leadership. Her son had a big ego but no charisma. Her son-inlaw was charismatic, but naive and simple. Her daughter lacked ability or vision but had political cunning and the mother's support. However they all believed unblushingly that they deserved to be leaders of this country as though it was their birthright..."

- P.R.De Silva, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS, Colombo, of July 19-20.

* * * * *

"Ours is a party that does not support the government nor work for the government. As it is common knowledge, both locally and internationally, that the three Tamil parties in Parliament, with whom a meeting has been arranged with you, support more the cause of the government than that of the Tamils in this island, a meeting with a Tamil party that has absolutely no connection with the government will undoubtedly enable you to get a more balanced position of the true situation prevailing in this island at the moment on the nationality problem and allied topics ..."

- G.G.Ponnambalam (Jr.)in a letter addressed to visiting Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer.

* * * * *

"What the Indo-Lanka Accord gave us was a meagre loin cloth to cover our nakedness. Today, we find that even this "kovanam" (amude, in Sinhala) has been snatched from us ".

-Columnist Taraki quoting the leader of a Tamil party that gave up its armed struggle after the accord. SUNDAY TIMES, July 27.

* * * * *

...The network of unholy alliances which keeps this one-vote majority government afloat is already under severe strain. Just think of a scenario where the P.A. government in Colombo collapses creating a political vacuum in the south while tens of thousands of Sinhala soldiers are surrounded by LTTE forces in the Vanni jungles..."

-SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo, July 27, quoting from an article in the inaugural issue of TAMIL GUARDIAN, London.

* * * * *

International

"Corruption, I say with great regret and pain, has seeped into the veins of this nation. It is not only those who are in ministerial positions who are corrupt. Of course they are, and something drastic has to be done about them

- Indian Prime Minister I.K.Gujral in an interview to Home TV telecast, July 20

* * * * *

"This is a conscious declaration of war against the Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the Palestinians in general. It is a total defiance of the signed peace agreement".

- An adviser to Yasser Arafat, Ahmed Tibi, referring to the proposal to build a new Jewish housing project in an Arab neighbourhood.

* * * * *

"Pakistan today has nuclear knowledge and a missile delivery system. I believe this will be a source of deterrence to anyone who is against Pakistan".

- former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto speaking in Colombo.

* * * * *

"After a year of coaching by her husband Prince Philip, the Queen, 71, has become a dab hand at navigating the information superhighway and even sending e-mails to a few select subjects"

- the SUNDAY TIMES, London.

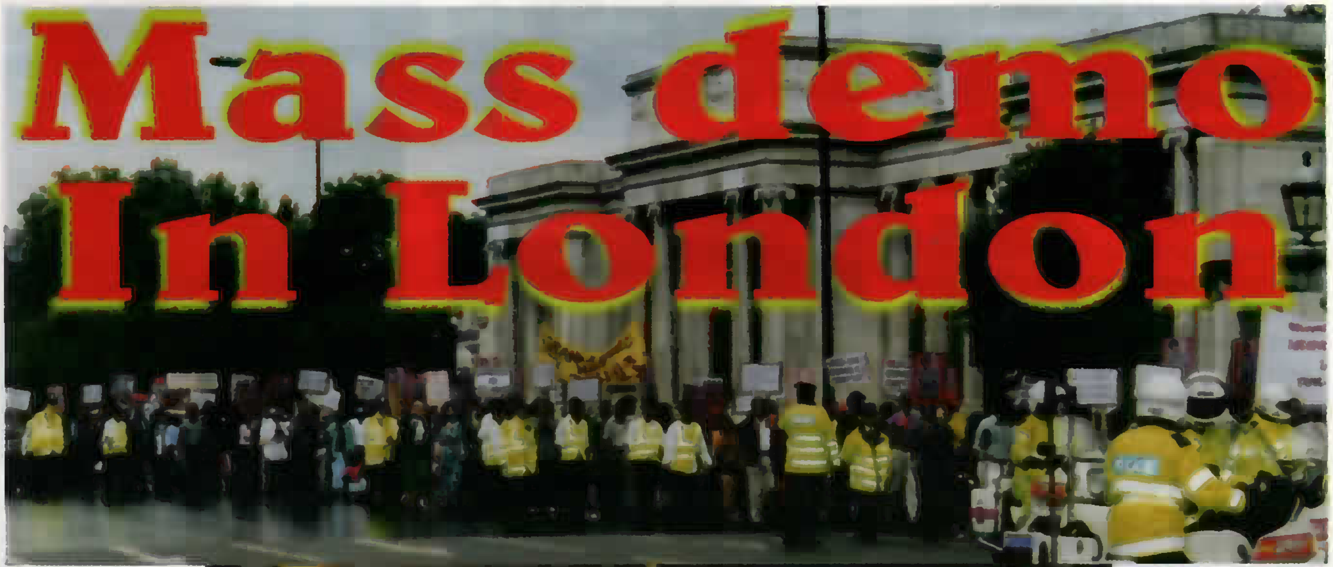
* * * * *

"Burma's government is among the most repressive and intrusive on earth"

- U.S.Secretary of State Madeline Albright, speaking in Subang Jaya, Malaysia.

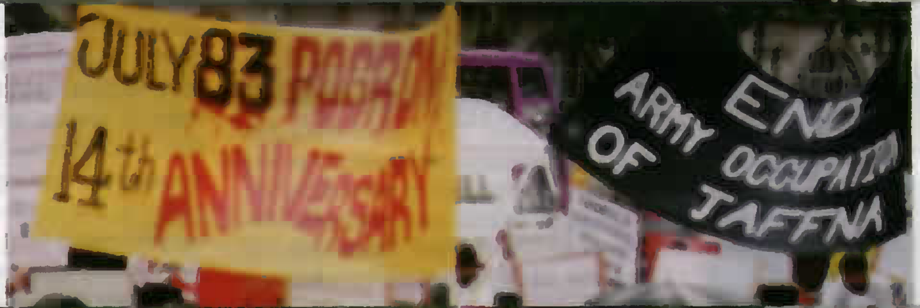
* * * * *

Mass demo In London



Tamils in their thousands braved the rains on Saturday 26 July and gathered at Temple Place, London, on a march to Hyde Park, to mark the brutal anti-Tamil pogrom of July '83.

It will be remembered that during the third week of July 1983 there occurred in Sri Lanka, incidents so terrible that shocked the whole civilised world. Tamils were hunted down and slaughtered in their thousands by agents of the government, Tamil-owned property was looted and destroyed, whole families of Tamils burnt alive in their cars by Sinhala Buddhist mobs. and even 67 Tamil political prisoners within the high-security Welikade jail were slaughtered by Sinhala criminal convicts within the prison walls while the prison officials looked on.


JULY 83 POGROM
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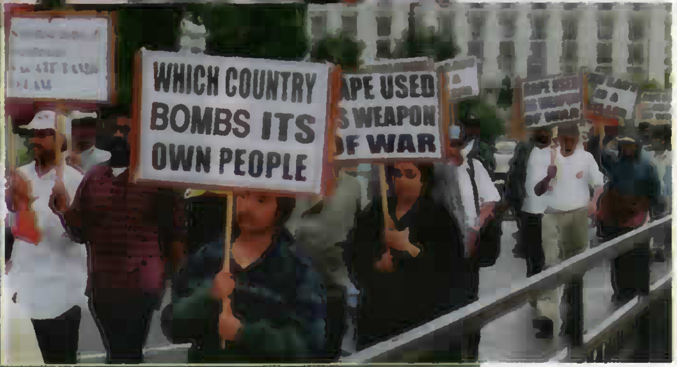
WHICH COUNTRY BOMBS ITS OWN PEOPLE
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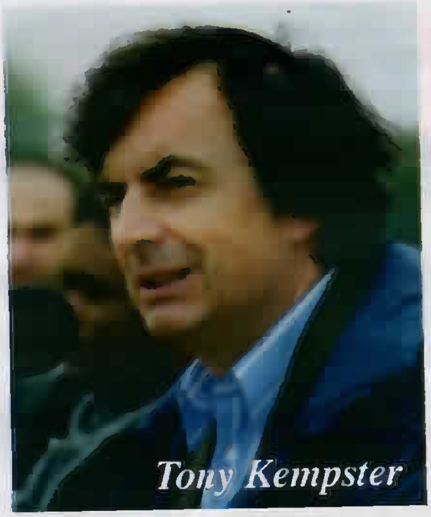
F WAR

The rally was also meant to condemn the current genocidal war against the Tamils waged by the Chandrika government, in which tens of thousands of Tamil civilians including babies in arms are languishing in the jungles of the Vanni, without food, shelter and medicine.

Speakers at the Hyde Park rally included three Britishers, Rachel Jenkins, Tony Kempster, and Mark Abrahams. Other speakers were a representative from Kurdistan, Fatimaharan from Oxford University, Shanthan, the LTTE head in Britain, Deirdre McConnell, Eliza Mann and young Madura Rasaratnam.

Rachel Jenkins

Rachel Jenkins brought greetings from Northern Baptist College and said the whole college was in solidarity with the Tamil people. They knew what was happening. She condemned the bombing of innocent Tamils still going on in the north and east, and the embargo on food and medicine which is causing immeasurable suffering. The instances of rape of Tamil women and girls by Sri Lankan forces are unbearable to listen to. She said that army brutality was horrific in Sri Lanka and that she knew from her experiences of South Africa how an oppressive regime can inflict cruelty on a people. She quoted Paolo Friere, "You can always rely on oppressive regimes to provoke confeontation". She said such governments will go to any lengths to hide the truth from the outside world and project a picture that would be untrue. It was the duty of the Tamil people and Tamil organisations to relay the truth and make the world wake Up to the suffering of the Tamils back home.


Tony Kempster

As a pacifist, Tony Kempster said he could not support any use of arms, but that as a concerned human being, he understood that people can be driven to violence when there was no way out of horrendous oppression used against them by an aggressor. In such a situation, even an outsider cannot remain neutral. It was an issue of "taking sides" in favour of the oppressed people. To be called a "moderate" might sound good, but what it really means is that the "moderate" allows the perpetuation of injustice He noted that account must be taken of the UK Parliamentary Group on Human Rights which in its recent April report defined the war in Sri Lanka as one of "national liberation in exercise of the right to self-determination".

Vivataphil

Mark Abraham

There needs to be a just political solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka, not simply Peace as absence of war. Maintaining a repressive rule for the sake of "peace" is not true reconciliation. He referred to the Labour government's commitment to human rights at the centre of its foreign policy, and called for a ban on weapons to oppressive governments such as in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

"I want to say how honoured I am to be asked to speak at this rally", said Mark Abraham, "not only honoured on behalf of my own organisations - that is CASTIS, Campaign Against State Terrorism in Sri Lanka as well as the Tamil Eelam Solidarity Network, but I am also honoured to have the opportunity of expressing support for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and

Continurd on page 13

Fatimaharan

Chandrika's War against the Tamil People

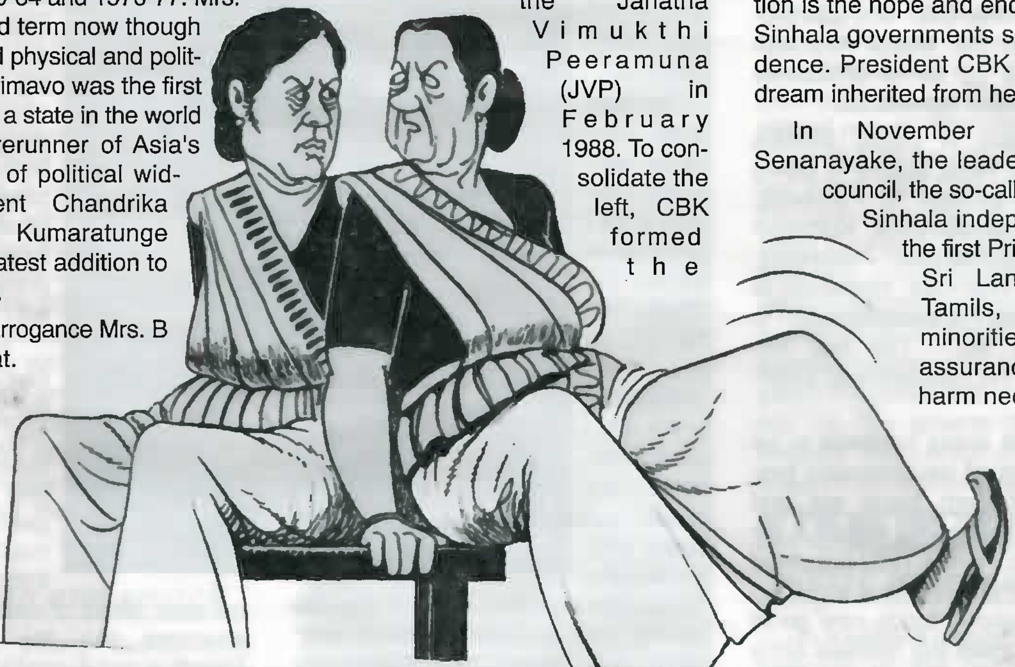
K. Kanavathipillai

Gladstone was the first Englishman to discover that the Irish and the English can never share the same bed but due to geography can never live apart. A statesman of his stature is unknown in Sri Lanka. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in his fledgling days talked of federalism for the Tamil provinces, but onoe he became Prime Minister in 1956, put Sinhala only in the statute book and inspired the first of a series of anti-Tamil riots.

On his assassination in September 1959 his hitherto obscure widow Srimavo Bandaranaike came to the forefront. She reigned as the Prime Minister in 1960-64 and 1970-77. Mrs. B enjoys a third term now though with diminished physical and political powers. Srimavo was the first female head of a state in the world and is the forerunner of Asia's special breed of political widows. President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge (CBK), is the latest addition to this tight circle.

For sheer arrogance Mrs. B is hard to beat. In 1964 she declared that the Tamils 'must accept' what little she offered. When the Tamils disagreed she institutionalised military repression. In 1972 she unilaterally abolished the independence constitution of 1948 and struck further blows on the Tamils. She did away with S.29 (2) which formed part of the old constitution and afforded a degree of safeguard for the minorities. She also abolished judicial appeals to the Privy Council.

President CBK is a 'rare bird', the daughter of two Prime Ministers, the surviving one still in harness. She became the leader of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP), a hardcore left organisation after her husband's sudden death. Vijaya Kumaratunge thespian turned politician was killed by the Janatha Vimukthi Peeramuna (JVP) in February 1988. To consolidate the left, CBK formed the United Socialist Alliance (USA). On the funeral day she signed the documents relative to the USA atop her husband's coffin.



Special breed of political widows

Immediately after, she left the country and took residence in London. On her eventual return, she relinquished the left leadership and joined her mother and in due course became the leader of the ultra right Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). This is the essence of the woman, working to her private agenda and quite capable of any twist or turn to suit her personal advantage.

A Sinhala nation based on language, a Sinhala government with the Tamils working for them and the dispersal and assimilation of Tamils through widespread Sinhala colonisation is the hope and endeavour of the Sinhala governments since independence. President CBK shares in the dream inherited from her parents.

In November 1945 D.S. Senanayake, the leader of the state council, the so-called architect of Sinhala independence and the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka told the Tamils, 'I give the minorities the sincere assurance that no harm need you fear at our hands in a free Lanka'. Tamil leaders were tricked into a false sense of security and voted for the Soulbury constitution, which eventually proved to be the downfall of the nation.

D.S.Senanayake repaid the Tamils for their co-operation with an aggressive state financed Sinhala colonisation of traditional Tamil homelands and by depriving Tamils of Indian origin of their citizenship and franchise. He began and completed the biggest ever colonisation project on Tamil land, Amparai, and in the process renaming the Tamil Pattipalai Aru as Gal Oya.

> *"CBK: A feudal residue and a throwback to the old haughty Bandaranaikes..."*

From 1948 onwards till the present day upwards of 2 lakhs of Sinhala families had been settled on the Tamil homeland.

Sophisticated arms are distributed to these settlers, the Sinhala military is employ to drive away the Tamil inhabitants and make way for the Sinhala colonists 3000 square miles of the Tamil land had been misappropriated in this manner. President CBK is now actively engaged in settling Sinhala families in the Hindu temple properties of the Trincomalee City. She also proposed to join the Manal Aru with Anuradhapura so as to effectively bifurcate the Tamil homeland.

The process of giving Sinhala names to the Tamil places is going apace, Pavatkulam to Padaviya, Seruwilai to Serunuwara, Kumaran Kadavai to Komaresan Kadawala, Manal Aru to Weli Oya, Yalpanam to Yapapatuna and Parayanalankulam to Sapumalpura etc. The last two changes are the handiwork of president CBK.

The Tamils areas continue to be excluded from all development programmes. Western loans aid and donations are exclusively utilised in the Sinhala areas. Since 1977 legalised oppression of the Tamils is a glaring reality. The above funds now go to expand and equip the Sinhala army which seeks to crush the Tamil struggle for freedom. However articulate she may be, president CBK is as steadfast as any of her predecessors in this respect.

Sri Lanka has consistently refused to recognise the Tamils as a people, it has rejected the Tamil claim to nationhood and homeland, President CBK is now directing a full-scale war against the Tamils for the suppression of their quest for political independence.

During the election year 1994 CBK wooded both Tamil and Sinhala voters with a cry for immediate peace and rode to victory on the peace ticket. Her catch all election manifesto promised a negotiated settlement. During the last 32 months of her assuming office she has carried war to extreme ends. Military rule now prevails in Jaffna. The rights of the Tamils are trampled underfoot. There is no guarantee of life, decency and dignity in the occupied zone.

D.S Senanayake: The "father of the Sinhala nation"

In less than one year she earned the disgust and hatred of the Tamils who for an extent trusted her verbal commitments made on public platforms. But immediate peace at any cost she has swung over to "peace through war" which only means..... beat down the Tamil people to submission to force them to accept a subordinate position.

Whatever guise president CBK may adopt,ardent socialist, peace lover, feminist, militarist and what not, she is essentially a feudal residue and a throwback to the old haughty Bandaranaike family traditions. The talks she initiated in Jaffna during 1994-1995 with leaders of the LTTE were an exercise in deviousness and an unmitigated political farce calculated to insult a proud people.

During the period of the above talks she went to India on a state visit in March 1995 and laid the foundations for the war against the Tamil people. She met with Prime minister P.V. Narasimaha Rao, her equal in political corruption and lack of principles and obtained promises of moral and military support, CBK also called on Sonia Gandhi, the near empress of India who has an imagined grievance against Tamil Eelam. Acting collusion with the hawks of New Delhi she made a cynical mockery of the Jaffna talks.

Today the politics of the Ratwatte, Kadirgamar, Pieris triumvirate represent the confused position at the top. The first person is for quick military success and accelerated colonisation, the second is for UNP-SLFP consensus and talks with the LTTE while the third is for rushing through with the hollow devolution package and marginalising the LTTE. Events prove that president CBK is with Ratwatte.

Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism is the article of faith and leitmotiv of president CBK. She has rejected peace overtures made by organisations like International alert, offers of mediation made by countries like the UK, Norway, Palestine and Australia to name a few. Her choice of the military option shows her for what she is. A true angel of death.

(The author is a former under secretary of the IBRD)

Life in the Northeast - July Diary

02 July

Mass protest in Manner

The government's media ban kept the outside world from seeing yesterday's dramatic gathering of thousands of Tamil civilians protesting against the harsh conditions inflicted on them in the name of liberation. Thick columns of people converged on the UNHCR's Mannar premises linking up with the hundreds of displaced people already squatted there. A memorandum setting out people's desperation was handed to the UNHCR and will now be passed to the Sinhala president. The people call for a halt to economic blockades, an end to the Sinhala army's targeting of civilian property and a repeal of the army order that civilians in army-territory should go to the army camp to obtain food.

Sub-standard brew

The death rate in occupied Jaffna due to sub-standard alcohol consumption is climbing. With the despair prevalent among Jaffna's residents due to the Sinhala army occupation, the amount of drinkers has shot up and with it the area's mortality rate. The deaths have been mostly due to the extremely poor quality of the brew. During the LTTE administration illicit brews were strictly prohibited but under army rule such drinks are being encouraged and promoted, not least for their value in engendering a docile population. 'Pot' arrack is being sold now in tea boutiques, markets and even in areas near temples and schools.

Round up and search

Over 150 young Tamils were paraded in an open field in front of Sinhala armed forces after a round-up and search operation in Mirusuvil north (Thenmaradchy, Jaffna). 300 troops participated in the round-up. Of those subsequently arrested, one man - Sathasivam Rethinam - has been identified as missing and feared murdered. While the operation was going on, troops shelled the grazing grounds and jungle areas of Mirusuvil. Cattle were killed in the attack.

03 July

Govt. obstructs relief work

NGOs in Sri Lanka acknowledged at an emergency meeting of foreign and local aid agencies in Mullaitivu, that the Government of Sri Lanka is purposelly disrupting the flow of urgently-needed food to thousands of Tamils displaced by its military offensives. Most NGO representatives in attendance openly stated that despite repeatedly presenting the government with facts and figures relating to the desperate food shortage among the Vanni displaced they had met with deliberate government obstructions to carrying out relief work. They also agreed that the amount of food being permitted through to Vanni is woefully inadequate. Strong words were used by a number of NGO representatives who accused the government of being "adamant" and "refusing to see reason". Government assurances of "adequate food supplies" should be viewed with extreme caution in the context of a two-year government ban on media to the region. UNHCR and ICRC too, were present in this meeting.

Food "allowed through" by the government to Vanni's non-displaced permanent residents is also inadequate. For 1996 only 2,464 lorries were permitted to travel to Mullaitivu district alone out of a needed 4,440 lorries - which was almost a 50% cut. Up to June 1997, out of the officially "allowed" 2,297 lorries, only 726 have actually been let through to Mullaitivu. (These refer not to "aid" supplies but legitimately purchased food which the government curtails).

Sick & hungry crowds

In response to the worsening food blockade - and denied access to the media - Tamil people are carrying out mass demonstrations across Vanni in protest at the government-imposed food-shortage. Sick and hungry crowds are marching in Mallavi today trying to impress upon the world their situation and their expectations. The mass gathering will end at the area's ICRC office where a petition will be handed over to the Sinhala president of Sri Lanka and the heads of all foreign NGOs. To those who wish to still delude themselves that Sri Lanka is liberating the Tamil people, free media access to these mass demonstrations would be an eye-opener.

Tamil school bombed

Low-flying Sri Lankan Kfir jets struck at a Tamil school in Munru murippu Palapani (Mankulam) yesterday. Bombs and rockets blasted the building which was also housing displaced people. The attack which took place at 7.30 am has critically injured two Tamil girls. One girl is Muniandy Nirmalaranee, the other has not yet been identified. The incident resembles one which occurred during the government's recent operation to occupy Jaffna. On that occasion dozens of school children were killed at a place called Nargakoil and foreign aid workers on the ground confirmed the tragedy. Sri Lanka continues such assaults on civilians with impunity.

04 July

UNHCR's security zone

In a belated recognition of the seriousness of the onslaught against Tamils by Sri Lanka's armed forces, UNHCR has hoisted the UN's flag at Puthur (Puthuvilankulam), declaring the area of 2.5 sq. kilometres a safe haven under its control. The move

Life in the Northeast - July Diary

comes at a time when the indiscriminate blasting of Tamil homes, public buildings and temporary shelters by Sinhala forces has reached fever-pitch. 10,000 people are staying in Puthur, Puthuvilankulam at present. Water is scarce however, and the region is largely shrub jungle. The UNHCR's intervention meanwhile, is welcome.

Kilinochchi under fire for weeks

Kilinochchi's towns have for the past few weeks been pounded with shells launched by the Sri Lankan army based Elephant Pass, Paranthan and Kilinochchi army camps. Many buildings and homes have been demolished.

05 July

Human chain demo

A massive human chain demonstration condemning the "state terrorism" of the Government of Sri Lankan took place yesterday across the Tamil town of Puthukudiyiruppu. The hungry, homeless, bedraggled Tamil people of the Vanni flocked together in huge numbers and held hands forming a chain that spanned several miles. They chanted slogans decrying a government which they accused of crippling them deliberately. They shouted that all the actions taking place in Tamil areas, like indiscriminate bombing, food and medicine embargoes and denial of the right to education were all symbols of "state terror". The protest organised by the Confederation of People's Committees began at 9am and went on till evening, when a public meeting took place addressed by the Union of NGOs, welfare groups for the displaced and Catholic and Hindu priests. A memorandum was later handed over to the organisation RED BARNA, for the attention of the UN secretary general regarding the current desperation of the Tamil population of Vanni. Another document was handed to Mullaitivu officials for the attention of Sri Lanka's president. There are some half a million Tamils are been presently homeless as a result of the Chandrika-government's successive military operations in the Tamil homeland.

Indonesians releasd

LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, has intervened on humanitarian grounds to secure the release of two Indonesian crewmen arrested after the vessel they were employed on was found trespassing within Tamil Eelam's maritime limits. 41-year old sailor Nankat and 44-year old engineer Vajudeen (both Indonesians) were arrested by LTTE officials a few days ago after the ship was found within the maritime limits of Tamil Eelam, off Pesalai (Mannar). Mr. Prabhakaran ordered the release of the two persons on humanitarian grounds. The two men were handed over yesterday morning in Mankulam by LTTE political officer Mr. Thangan to ICRC representative Mr. John Borr.

Army shells safety zone

Sri Lankan forces have shelled an area of Puthur (Puthuvilankulam) which a few days ago was designated by the UNHCR as a "safety zone". Early reports say there are some human casualties. The safety zone covers an area of 2.5 sq. km and there are about 10,000 Tamil people who are within it. Water is in short supply here.

Tamil girls disappear

Two Tamil girls returning from Saudi Arabia have been arrested by Sinhala soldiers at Vavuniya. They had been travelling with Sri Lankan Red Cross officials in a Red Cross vehicle (bearing the red cross insignia) when troops off-loaded them and took them away. The whereabouts of the girls are still not known though the incident happened four days ago. The girls' parents - mindful of the appalling human rights record of Sinhala forces - fear the worst for their daughters.

MSF feels helpless

Doctors of the respected French aid agency MSF operating in the Mallavi hospital say they cannot provide a proper service to Tamil patients because of the Sri Lankan government's medical embargo to the Vanni. Last month alone, over 17,000 patients had to be treated at Mallavi hospital owing to the outbreak of severe illness caused by the food and medicine embargoes. However, these patients did not receive adequate treatment because of the scarcity of medicines. Only 42 beds are found in the hospital but there are at least 150 patients accommodated there at any time.

July 5 Black Tigers Day

July 5 is 'Black Tigers' day in Tamil Eelam. Ten years ago captain Miller blasted the enemy's camp on the 5th of July. Thereafter, this date is one for solemn contemplation and celebration. Today Vanni once again celebrates 'Black Tigers Martyrs day'.

Spoilt flour dolled out

200 metric tonnes of spoilt flou unfit for human consumption wa passed on by the government to Tam bakeries in Jaffna last week. Loca bakers refused to use it. Jaffna ha become the government's dumping ground for waste materials gathere from other parts of the island.

Drunken soldiers

Drunken Sri Lankan soldiers standing by a post office in Chulipuram wer berserk attacking ordinary civilians wit rifle-butts. 39-year old Kanthasam Sivasubramaniam (father of 3) is in th Jaffna teaching hospital in a dangerou condition.

Life in the Northeast - July Diary

07 July

"Safe Haven" now unsafe

A tentative attempt by the UN's refugee agency UNCHR to establish a "safe haven" for displaced Tamil people in Vanni has been aborted after Sinhala armed forces bombed the place within days of it being set up. The UN's flag has rapidly been taken down from Puthur Puthuvilankulam to signify that it is no longer a UN-sponsored security zone. The fate of thousands of Tamil men, women and children who have to remain here is again uncertain. No alternative arrangements have yet been made for them and they are being left to fend for themselves. This remarkable incident clearly illustrates the kind of war Sri Lanka is carrying out against Tamils, behind its media blockade. If the UNHCR was not able to sustain a safe haven for Tamils for more than a few days due to vicious raids by Sri Lanka's armed forces, it is not hard to imagine what is taking place against Tamils out of view of the international agencies.

Barbed wire prison

Sri Lanka has grown tired of transporting "arrested" Tamils from occupied Jaffna to Sinhala districts for the purpose of displaying them in front of the media to titillate the gloating public. Exhibiting like cattle, innocent Tamil youth tagged "terrorists" seemed to become something close to a sport for Sinhala military officials. But the sport seems to have lost its thrill. Now, such Tamil "prisoners" are being immediately put into a hospital-turned-prison in Tellipalai (Jaffna). Fences, barbed wire and earthworks are being erected around the outer rim.

Tamil milkman killed

An 18-year old Tamil milkman was recently stabbed to death by Sinhalese soldiers on Mahilady Bridge, in occupied Batticaloa. The unprovoked attack on Selliah Karunanithy took place on the bridge itself while the young man was doing his rounds. His body - which had been sliced to pieces - was deposited at Batticaloa hospital.

Black Tiger day in Trinco

Trincomalee's residents have gathered in large numbers to celebrate 'Black Tigers' Day. The main event was held in the dockyard school premises with Mr. Thangan - head of the LTTE's political division in Trincomalee - in the chair. Tamil Eelam's national flag was raised by Mr. Prakash, deputy head of the Tampalakamam division. Members of the public and school children participated in the proceedings and portraits of the Black Tigers - valued for the ultimate sacrifice they made for their people's sake - were garlanded with flowers. The gathering was followed by a sports meet and a Tamil cultural event.

Celebrations were also held in Thatachana Maruthamadu (Mannar) and Skanthapuram (Vanni), where massive crowds also attended. Portraits of the total 105 Black Tigers were paraded publicly in a dramatic display of popular sympathy.

Not even one meal

Many thousands of displaced Tamils whose food supply lines have been cut by the Government of Sri Lanka - a signatory to the Geneva Convention - are finding themselves increasingly desperate. One meal a day is unlikely for many of the people, as dry rations needed to relieve civilians displaced by the government's own military offensives are being held back deliberately. Undoubtedly, food is being used here as a weapon of war. The massive demonstrations being held by the hungry in Vanni - screened off by the government's media ban - are testimony to the state of affairs. There is a growing sense among the civilian population that their plight has been forgotten. Sri Lankan authorities - by the lack of condemnation - are clearly encouraged to continue with their food-siege.

09 July

37 North Korean crew safe

The LTTE has contacted local ICRC officials to hand over 37 North Korean crewmen being held in LTTE custody. The Sri Lankan-hired "MV Moranghong" was sailing within "Tamil Eelam's territorial" waters on 7th July on its way back to Colombo from Kankesanthurai harbour (Jaffna peninsula) when it was stopped by the LTTE's naval forces at around 7pm. The ship ignored orders to stop and one crewman was killed in the process of bringing the ship under control. The other 37 are safe and well. Arrangements have been made with the ICRC to hand over the 37 crewmen as well as the body of the sailor who died. Sri Lankan military hardware is known to be carried along the sea-route on which the Sri Lankan-hired vessel was stopped. Such weapons and equipment are used to harm and repress Tamil people living in the North/East.

TRO to the rescue

The Tamils' Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) functioning in Vanni has secured the supply of one week's food to the starving of Puthukudiyiruppu and Mallavi, where massive demonstrations have been held protesting the government's food-blockade to the region. The TRO says it can provide one meal a day to men, women and children here for the next week only (up to 15th July). The Sri

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Lankan government meanwhile appears deaf to the appeals made by thousands of civilians, many local NGOs and international NGOs who have asked it to permit fully the flow of food to Tamils in Vanni.

President not available

Sri Lanka's president Chandrika Kumaratunga is still refusing to meet a human rights group which represents the parents of 700 Tamil youth 'disappeared' by Sinhala forces in Jaffna over the past two years. Refusal to discuss what is self-evidently an urgent problem clearly exposes the Sinhala president's lack of feeling towards innocent relatives of missing Tamil children. The Society for the Disappeared says its efforts to initiate a dialogue with the Sinhala military authorities in Jaffna were futile and attempts to talk to the government's representative in Jaffna have met with insulting evasiveness. The entire Sinhala hierarchy is trying to slip out of its responsibility for these crimes, which are continuing unabated in the Jaffna peninsula, confirming (to those who still doubt it) that Tamils in Sri Lanka cannot expect even recognition of their grievances, let alone justice.

11 July

Jaffna's new GA reports

Jaffna's new government agent (GA) Mr. Shanmuganthan has compiled a report outlining the damage done by Sri Lanka's army in the peninsula, which starkly contradicts the Sri Lankan government's own version. Mr. Shanmuganthan's report highlights that at least 650 Tamil civilians have 'disappeared' from the peninsula since the Sinhala occupation (of a total 1150 arrested) and that 50% of civilian dwellings here have been demolished by army bombardments. The report also reveals that the government has not taken any remedial action towards improving the situation.

Held on concocted charges

Frivolous charges are being concocted by Sri Lankan (Sinhala) police to arrest Tamils seeking to leave Sri Lanka for employment. 34 Tamil youth (both male and female) were recently arrested at Katunayake airport despite all their documents being genuine and despite not having committed any offence. Sri Lanka's minister of Justice has ordered that they be charged under the Immigration and Emmigration Act. More recently, 7 young Tamil people from Batticaloa were arrested in their lodgings in Maradana as they prepared to leave the country for work. Though their documents of travel and identity were faultless the minister has sanctioned their arrest under the same Act.

Sinhala & Tamil - the contrast

Three poverty-alleviation schemes are in force in Sinhala areas - the food-stamp scheme (introduced by Jayawardane); the Janasaviya scheme (by Premadasa); and the Samurdhi programme (by Kumaratunge). Under the latter, the Sinhala poor receive a monthly hand-out of 700 rupees plus free foodstuffs and other essentials. Tamils of the north/east get none of these benefits. Even the little they obtained in the past is being whittled down to the point where even the minimum necessary for survival is being curtailed in places. 25,000 Tamil families in Mullaitivu alone were rendered destitute last month after their food-stamps were withdrawn by the government. Another 19,359 Tamil families in Mullaitivu have now also become affected by the cut. On top of all this, the Chandrika government actually hampers the relief attempts of foreign NGOs who are trying to assist the suffering people of Vanni.

Framed Tamil woman freed

A Tamil woman imprisoned without charge for over two years in Batticaloa has been freed after it was found out that the Sinhala police who arrested her had set her up after she refused to have sex with them. Batticaloa police arrested Selvarajah Thavamlar (31) of Karuveppankerni - a mother of four - in May 1995 on the charge of concealing explosives. But the woman had to be freed after the high court was faced with incontrovertible evidence that police had set her up. She had been arrested and held without charge under Sri Lanka's draconian emergency regulations which allows Sinhala police to hold Tamils without charge for well over a year. There are many hundreds of innocent Tamils languishing in Sinhala prisons whose cases stand little chance of being re-heard.

Home for elders

A home for the elderly was opened by the TRO in Aiyanpuram (Vanneri) on June 7th. TRO financed the project under its accelerated development scheme. The home is named after Jaffna's foremost saint, Yogar Swami.

12 July

North Korean captain astonished

The North Korean captain of the Sri Lankan-hired ship which was recently intercepted by LTTE forces of the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka says he is astonished at the levels o suffering he witnessed in Vanni. MV Moranghong's skipper said he was distressed at the way Tamils have been made homeless, disease-ridden and

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rendered starving by the government of Sri Lanka. Describing Sri Lanka's government as "merciless" he said he now understood why Tamils were fighting against it. "All these years I was under the impression that only one race lived in Sri Lanka," he said, "but it is clear that there are two races of people. The government is obviously in the hands of one race, which is attacking the other race." He continued: "I wish the Tamil people well. They must establish their own country and government to live peacefully. They have no alternative."

"Sex knocks" at midnight

Tamil women in Batticaloa are leaving their homes at night to avoid sexual abuse from Sri Lanka's Sinhala army. Soldiers have a habit of knocking on doors and making "identity checks" on young women which end up in sexual ordeals for the women concerned. Sri Lanka's Thuriyady army camp is notorious for this sort of activity carried out nightly against the residents of Kravelkuli, Chettikudiyiruppu and Kiran. Many Tamil women from here have begun moving to safer locations at night to avoid harassment.

Famine S.O.S and appeal

The political department of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has sent an urgent appeal to all government- and non-government agencies in Vanni to help defeat the famine engineered by the Government of Sri Lanka. Totally blocked off from the outside world, the situation is too desperate to ignore any longer. The effects of being stranded without medicine and food for such a long periods are taking their toll on the men, women and children here, who are depleted and hungry. They have been demonstrating in their thousands. Emergency humanitarian work is necessary at this juncture. NGOs should not wait for conditions similar to Zaire or Ethiopia before acting. The current food shortage is entirely man-made: the Sinhala military is keeping Tamils away from food supplies. The military blocks all entry-points to Vanni while creating conditions within the Vanni (i.e., homelessness, insecurity) such that it is impossible to produce food there. Government claims of food being "sent" are entirely baseless.

15 July

"Ships with military supplies will be targeted" - LTTE

"We cannot be party to the government ruse of shipping war materials to Jaffna under the pretext of supplying food and necessities for the people", the LTTE leadership has said in a policy statement in its official organ Viduthalai Puligal.

The statement continues: while holding back the bare necessities to Tamils in Vanni, Sri Lanka is declaring that the people of Jaffna are being pampered, fed and clothed. But the real situation is far different. The government is mainly engaged in feeding, clothing and equipping its Sinhala army of occupation in the peninsula while the Tamil inhabitants of Jaffna do not enter into its calculations at all.

Under these conditions the LTTE has no option but to regard these military-servicing Sri Lankan vessels as legitimate military targets. Since these supply-vessels constitute a threat to the Tamil people, they will not be permitted to carry out their sinister function.

It is against the interests of the Tamil nation to allow Sri Lanka to strengthen its entirely-Sinhalese military forces so they can better harm and repress the Tamil inhabitants of Jaffna and conduct further callous military operations against the Tamil people in Vanni. The LTTE is not prepared to compromise the security of the Tamil people and will therefore do its utmost to prevent the traffic of items which do nothing other than strengthen Sri Lanka's military capability.

16 July

Why Muslims are held

Seven people from Irakandy (Trincomalee) held in custody by the LTTE have been released on humanitarian grounds on the orders of Tamil Eelam's national leader, Mr. V. Prabakaran, states the LTTE.

Those released are a priest - Moulavi Abdul Rahnman - and six students, including Nauparniyaz, Nilamdeen, Niroz, Irshad and Sarajkahan. They were handed over to ICRC's representative Mr. Johan Paul by the LTTE's head of administration (political sector) Mr. Thangan. Thirty-two more from the same village remain in LTTE custody.

They are suspected of being agents of the Sri Lankan army and were involved in an incident which took place on June 28, as recounted below:

Some LTTE members met with an accident at sea and were forced to swim many miles to shore. They finally reached Irakandy (in Trincomalee) in an exhausted state and requested assistance from the local people. Though the LTTE members carried no weapons of defence and were not carrying cyanide capsules some of the villagers there severely assaulted them and later handed over the defenceless fighters to Sinhala armed forces, in whose custody they remain.

The LTTE was compelled to arrest a number of villagers suspected of these acts of gross inhumanity. We understand our fighters are now undergoing horrendous forms of torture at the

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hands of the Sinhala army. Indeed, their lives remain in grave danger. The LTTE cannot reasonably tolerate such a situation and this is why we continue to hold these suspected agents who were involved in the assault and handing over of our fighters.

We assure concerned individuals and organisations that all those detained are being treated humanely. We also stress that they are not "hostages" but people held in custody.

However, we are willing to show leniency in this instance and to release all those held if the freedom of our own fighters is secured.

We appeal to Muslim political leaders to work earnestly towards this end and to use all their influence to ensure the hasty release of our fighters.

We further stress that the arrests of these mainly Muslim villagers was not enacted on ethnic grounds. We have always viewed Muslims as our brothers, and will continue to do so. Indeed, Mr. Prabakaran's decision to release 7 suspects on humanitarian grounds is a gesture of good-will intended to promote and consolidate existing Tamil-Muslim amity.

However, the Irakandy incident still causes us deep pain and sorrow. We not only condemn the assault upon our defenceless fighters, we strongly urge everybody to ensure that no repetition of such incidents occurs in the future. Our fighters put their own dear lives on the line for the sake of national freedom and we cannot allow them to be betrayed in this manner to the Sinhala army.

Cattle wiped out

Sri Lanka's armed forces are shelling the Tamil towns of Thanimurrippu and Arumugathan Kulam. Already, hundreds of cattle which had to be left behind when residents fled have been slaughtered. The shelling came from Sri Lanka's military camps at Manal Aru and Mankindimalai.

17 July

Buddha statues in Jaffna

The process of assimilation of Tamils is underway in Jaffna with Buddha statues being brought in and installed in key locations, at the insistence of leading Buddhist monks in the Sinhala-south. Sinhala troops are busy placing Buddha statues under Jaffna's Bo trees. A huge Buddha statue was placed last week at the Irupalai-Kopay junction where four trunk roads intersect. The occupying Sinhala forces are imposing the Sinhalese religion on a proud and ancient people. There is a sinister undercurrent to all this - the government is keen to obscure the territorial integrity of the Tamil nation by gradually replacing symbols of Tamil culture with those of Sinhala culture.

Hospital shelled

Sri Lanka's army has carried out a savage artillery raid on the Tamil hospital at Akkarayan (Kilinochchi) killing four civilians. The attack happened at 8.30pm on Tuesday. Sri Lankan troops based at Kilinochchi, Elephant Pass and Nedunkerni have been intensifying attacks on schools and hospitals of late. Artillery shells pierced through Akkarayan hospital's staff quarters killing a staff-member Antony Kanapathy (47), his father-in-law Raman (70), his wife Ketharny (43) and his son Umasankar (14).

The hospital's deputy health officer, Mahalingam Senthilnathan (40) is badly wounded together with four others: K. Vethakumar (25), A. Karuppan (56), K. Kirushanti (60) and Thavarasa Maheswari (29).

Some patients at this hospital have been evacuated to Mallavi hospital while the rest have had to be sent home for lack of facilities. Artillery shells are continuing to fall on the area and so Akkarayan hospital is unable to resume its services.

School girl raped

A Tamil school girl in Araly South (occupied Jaffna) on her way to a leading Jaffna school was dragged by two Sinhala soldiers to a secluded spot where she was beaten senseless and raped. The 17-year old girl is currently in Jaffna teaching hospital with severe injuries.

19 July

Teacher gang-raped

A 20-year old volunteer teacher, Krishnapillai Santhirakala, was gang-raped by Sinhala soldiers as she walked from her workplace to her home in Karanavai (Vadamaradchy). This is a pattern emerging in army-occupied Tamil areas where local girls are brutally raped in retaliation for refusing marriage offers from members of the armed forces. Sri Lanka's commanding officers have not responded to local people's protests about such incidents.

Children forced to beg

Sri Lanka's Additional Government Agent for Kilinochchi, Mr. Rasanayagam, has admitted to a gathering of educationalists and the general public that 34,000 Tamil children in Vanni are either begging on the road or reduced to doing menial work for a pittance. School-life has been totally disrupted by the Sri Lankan government's ongoing military operations on the Tamil homeland.

Mass demo . . . Continued from page 4

the whole of the Tamil people."

"We all know that this terrible war is largely financed on the government side by money from the West - what is normally termed as "Aid", "Western Aid". But it is important to realise that none of this "Aid" is freely given - these are not just hand-outs from the richer countries to those who are poorer to salve western consciences - as many seem to think. All major financial commitments from the IMF and other world banks are in reality INVESTMENTS made by the West who will in the long run expect every pound, every mark, every dollar, to be returned ; not only to be returned but with all the interest to be paid back as well.

There are now about forty Third World countries, mortgaged to the hilt by "Aid" that has been given in the past and this list will soon include Sri Lanka. The IMF and other agencies who are owed money by these aountries impose "conditions" that is, they tell those countries directly how to run their affairs.This is what is happening and will be happening to Sri Lanka for a long time into the future.

In recent years a very active campaign to privatise most of Sri Lanka's services has been put into operation. This is similar to the one suffered by this country over the past 18 years under the Tories and most of us who live and work in this country have seen at first hand what privatisation can do. Many people welcome privatisation because they see services possibly working more efficiently, but all what privatisation means exactly what it says it is - the shifting of resources out of the hands of the public and into the hands of the few, who then milk off the profits for their own use, profits that would previously have gone into improving and maintaining that service and the working conditions of those employed. That this has been happening in Sri Lanka at the same time as the war is no accident.

Apart from the fact that most people have been kept so busy with the war, they have hardly the time to notice what is happening International Big Business has plans for Sri Lanka and one of the main reasons why the LTTE are seen as a threat is because the existence of a strong national movement for liberation in parts of the island will get in the way of western selfinterests A one single Sri Lanka will be much easier for Western Big Business to use as a nice stable half-way house on route from the West to the Far East. The West also hopes that Sri Lanka will become a major tourist fleshpot just like the fleshpots already fully operating in Thailand and Burma. Again it's no accident that at the opposite end of where the war is going on - deep in the Sinhala heartland - we are now also observing the growth of child prostitution on the sunshine beaches of the Indian Ocean.

In company with America, Germany, Japan and other major powers, Britain "gives" 8 million pounds of Aid to Sri Lanka every year. Virtually all this money is used to prop up the war - certainly none of it is spent on the ordinary Tamil people. Every penny, plus interest will have to be repaid. But the Sri Lanka government doesn't care about the future for the moment. Its main concern is to smash the LTTE and to completely humiliate the Tamil people for having the impudence to support the LTTE.

As a member of CASTIS and the Tamil Solidarity Network, I want to say how important we believe these annual marches are. But we must take this good feeling of solidarity and support and find ways to carry it forward for the rest of the year. We must all find ways of helping to educate the British government the British Press and the rest of the British community as to what is really going on. We can't all be fulltime activists we can't devote our entire lives to these issues. But if everyone does what little they are able to , this soon mounts up to an awful lot.

We need links wherever there are Tamils living in Britain, wherever there are people repelled by the genocide on the island. The more pressure we can bring to the Western Press and on the British government, the sooner the war can be brought to an end. What we are saying is this - not only try to link up with the Tamil Eelam Solidarity Network, but also write to your M.P. ask him to speak directly to Derek Fatchett who is Labour's man in charge of South- East Asia. You may be very surprised - many British M.P.s have already been sent information on Sri Lankaor made it their business to find out more - but if this has been the case, your letter won't have been wasted. The more people who write, the stronger the tide of disgust and anger at this dreadful tragedy unfolding as the whole world watches - or rather doesn't appear to see.

Pastor's famous poem turned on its head !

Mark Abraham ended his speech by saying

"I'd like to finish by reading you a new version of Pastor Niemoellor's famous poem of despair - you will all recognise the words - but the message has been turned on its head. This is the message with which CASTIS would like to leave you -

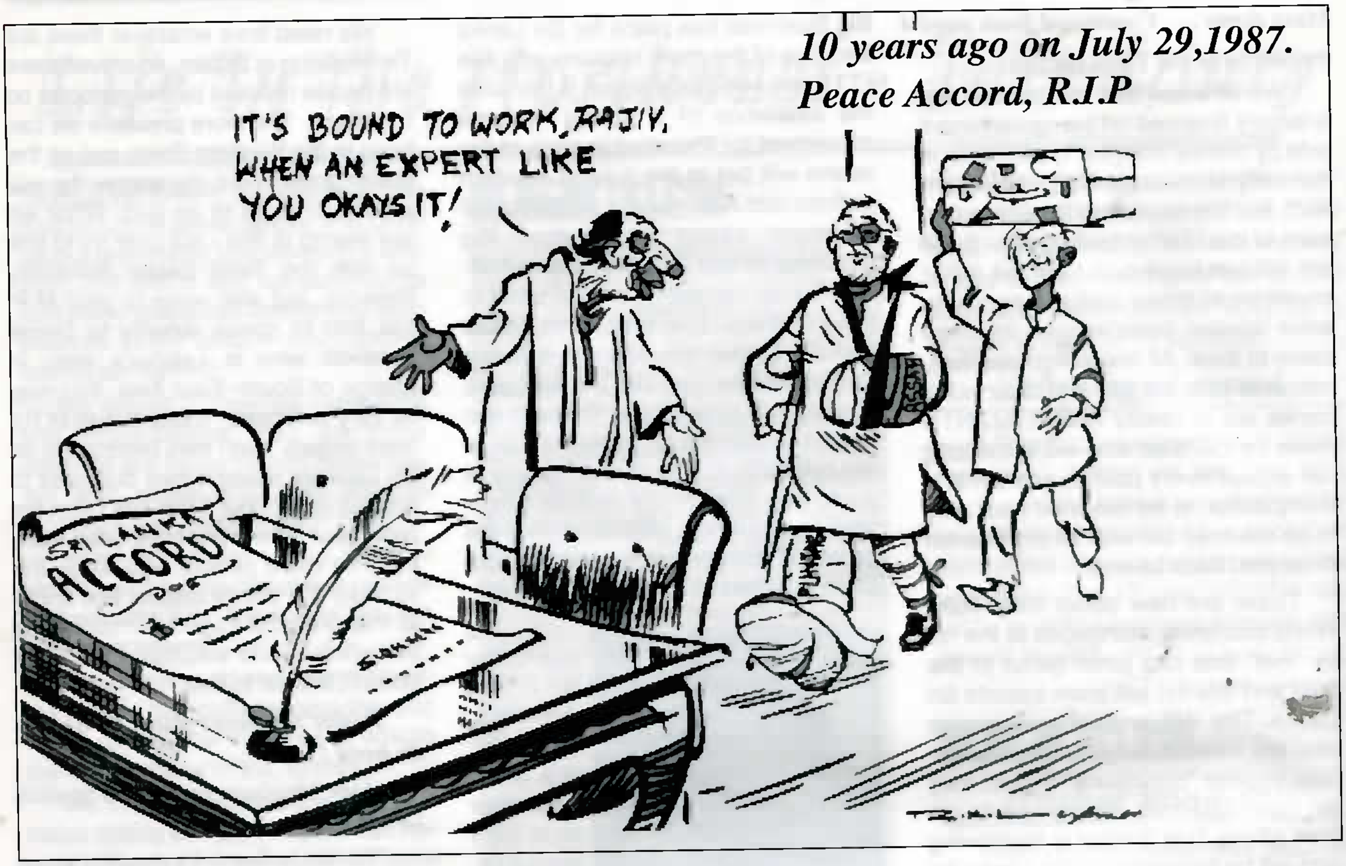
First they came for the Jews and I spoke out even though I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists and again I spoke out and the Jews spoke out with me even though many of us at that time were not with the Communists.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists and again I spoke out and the Jews and the Communists spoke out with me even though again many of us were not Trade Unionists

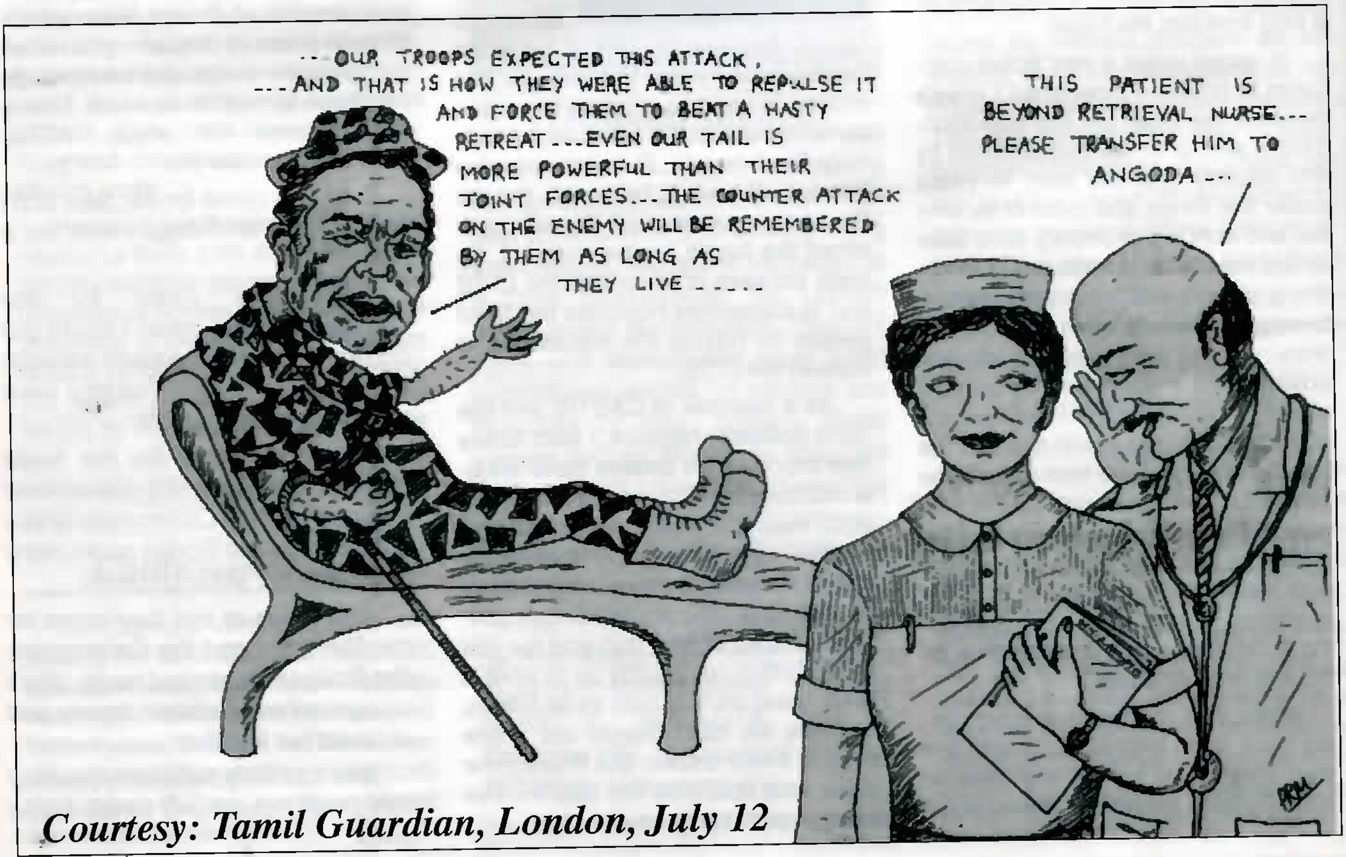
And when at last they came for me The Jews and the Communists The Trade Unionists and many others recognised our common enemy and all spoke out together

And suddenly the enemy seemed very small indeed and simply faded away.



10 years ago on July 29,1987.
Peace Accord, R.I.P

IT'S BOUND TO WORK, RAJIV, WHEN AN EXPERT LIKE YOU OKAYS IT!
SRI LANKA ACCORD



...OUR TROOPS EXPECTED THIS ATTACK, ...AND THAT IS HOW THEY WERE ABLE TO REPULSE IT AND FORCE THEM TO BEAT A HASTY RETREAT ...EVEN OUR TAIL IS MORE POWERFUL THAN THEIR JOINT FORCES...THE COUNTER ATTACK ON THE ENEMY WILL BE REMEMBERED BY THEM AS LONG AS THEY LIVE .....
THIS PATIENT IS BEYOND RETRIEVAL NURSE... PLEASE TRANSFER HIM TO ANGODA ...

Courtesy: Tamil Guardian, London, July 12

Colonial Origins of present ethnic war and Disappearances in Sri Lanka

Sinnappu Maharasingam

Text of a statement submitted to the 3rd Conference of the International Committee Against Disappearances (ICAD) held in Bogota, Columbia on 11th, 12th and 13th July. The statement was read at the Conference by a founder-member of ICAD, writer, dramatist and poet, Rod Wooden.

Sri Lanka is situated at the tip of Southern India, whose 13.5 million majority Buddhist Sinhalese population speak the Sinhala language and occupy the southern and central parts of the island, while 3.5 million Tamil-speaking people occupy the northeast homelands and the central highlands who are mostly Hindus. Within both of these major races, there are a good number of Christians; and 7 percent of Sri Lankans population are Tamil speaking Muhammadans.

Both the main races, Sinhalese and Tamils, have lived separately under their respective kings for over two thousand years, interspersed by wars, with no sense of sharing a common history or culture. There is a Tamil history and a Sinhala history and 400 years of oppressive colonial history, first by the Portuguese, then the Dutch and last by the British superimposed on both the Tamil and Sinhala psyche. Whereas the Portuguese and the Dutch recognised the separate identity of both races, it was the British that forced the Tamils into a unitary state in 1883 after the Tamils went under in a frontal war with the British independently of the Sinhalas in the field of battle led by the Ela Tamil Chieftain Pandara Vannian in 1803. The last Tamil king of Jaffna was taken as a prisoner to Goa and hung in 1662, after he lost the war with the Portuguese; and the Tamil kingdom was lost for ever. These repressive years, like in other parts of the world and in your country, have shown that the Tamil grassroot liberation is a living force to challenge the neocolonial Sinhala repression of today by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam(LTTE) under the leadership of Veluppillai Prabaharan. The whole world recognises this challenge as an anticolonial struggle to free the people of their bondage of caste, creed and dowry system that denies the woman her equality, which are ingrained in both societies. The Tamil Tiger liberation struggle is therefore bound to win in the long run, for it has eradicated these evils from the Tamil homelands (the Sri Lankan Sinhala grassroot society is only now waking up to this crisis within their own society) and is inspiring the upco untry Tamils to liberate themselves from their life-long bondage to live in 'cooly lines' in degrading human conditions - the British legacy - to ownership of land, which right they have been denied for the last 200 years.

Rohana Wijeweera summary execution

When the British left the island in 1948, for all intents and purposes,they left the Tamil people at the mercy of the majority Sinhalas without adequate protection of the right of the Tamils to equal political participation. The result is the old Colonial formula repeating itself - divide and rule. Sinhala nationalism turned into anti-Tamil racism and the Tamils' right to challenge was subjected to severe suppression by sucessive neo-colonialist Sinhala regimes. To protect the Tamil social, cultural and economic way of life - lands, language, places of worship, higher education and occupational prospects - Tamil youths took up to arms to resist a series of government sponsored repression from 1952 to the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom, when peaceful means of attaining the right to self-determination by elected Tamil politicians failed. Today, only the highly disciplined guerrilla resistance of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(LTTE) is safeguarding the Tamil people from facing a full scale genocide, as the Sinhala people had faced in some villages in the deep south of the island during and after the insurgency of the Sinhala Marxist group JVP. Over 100,000 innocent Sinhalas were massacred by the Sinhala military in revenge killings in two JVP insurgencies led by a Marxist Leader Rohana Wijeweera, who was captured and suffered the same fate as Che Guevara in Bolivia of a summary execution. The way he was put to death must haunt the 'Buddhist' Sinhala minds for a long time to come.

This ethnic war has already killed some 60, 000 civilian Tamils and over half a million have fled abroad overseas as refugees and over a million are internally displaced. Many of these killings by the Sinhalas were as a result of violent outbursts of ethnic hatred, which were systematically encouraged by the state, the Buddhist hierarchy, the chauvinists and by Sinhala politicians for their political ends as is evident to this day in that no one is being held responsible to these brutal crimes within the military, police and the special task force, which also operates as death squads, they are responsible for the gross violations of human rights by torture, rape, disappearances and extrajudicial executions of Tamils in the capital city of Colombo and in the northeast homelands. The victims are invariably innocent Tamil boys and girls, who are arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations, as suspected Tamil Tigers, aided and abetted, in particular, by the aid, arms and military training given to Sri Lanka by the last colonial ruler, Britain, under the previous 18 years of intransigent Tory government and the United States of America, whose support are encouraging large scale Tamil ethnic cleansing in Tamil villages by the Sri Lankan security forces.

The entire northeast homelands is an army camp. Over 500,000 fled within a few days when over 100,000 Sinhala army marched into the Jaffna peninsula in 1995, home to over 800,000 Tamils. As a result of the on going war over a million Tamils are displaced having been uprooted and dispossessed by the armed forces. They are languishing in camps in the Wanni lands without adequate food and drinking water, medicine and shelter, controlled by the very security forces, who are also responsible for large scale disappearances.

In the absence of a strong United Nations response, our appeals on the genocidal violence perpetrated by the Sri Lankan security forces on the Tamil people are going unheeded. The UNHCR and ICRC who are present in the northeast appear powerless to protect the displaced refugees, after having signed a Memorandom of Understanding with the Sri Lankan government. The international community too has failed and by the time the world realises the plight of the Tamils, they could be wiped out of their existence by genocide.

DISAPPEARANCES

Disappearances are a daily occurance in the capital city of Colombo and northeast Tamil homelands. Amnesty International "Urgent Action" states "acknowledging reports that investigations into disappearances of Miss Krishanthy Kumaraswamy, her mother, brother and neighbour have resulted in their bodies having been found in shallow graves", are only a tip of an iceburg. Another mother of a disappeared son Dias Edwin aged 17, a student, is appealing in a letter written to the Sri Lankan President, "It was reliably learnt that on this day , the security forces had taken into custody a few persons. . . . . . .

600 in one year

..... I have sound reasons to believe that my son Dias Edwin is also one of those arrested. I most humbly implore your excellency as a mother to arrange for the tracing of the whereabouts of my son and arrange for his early release...which will be a real blessing for our family which is undergoing untold agony."

The mother's heart never closes its door for the disappeared son or daughter. To them they are everywhere. We saw defiance on the brave faces of Kurdish and Turkish mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands and wives whose dear ones had disappeared in Istambul and again in Koln at the ICAD conferences in 1996. We all share this inexhaustible pain and challenge with them for ever. They give us the energy to fight on. Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and relatives of disappeared dear ones in this audience, in Sri Lanka and everywhere else, we are with you and let their spiritual strength guide us on in the struggle for freedom of thought and freedom of speech. The 'so called' Western democracies who enrich these military establishments only to prop up tin-pot dictators. There is no one to question. But freedom comes from their sacrifices - the ultimate challenge.

This 'agony' of disappearances is shared by many thousands of mothers throughout Sri Lanka - the Tamil Northeast, Colombo and down Sinhala south - where heinous and cowardly crimes have been committed with impunity by the Sri Lankan security forces and the death squads (armed civilian units). Amnesty International further warns by their News Service of 11 April 1997 that, "Amnesty International submitted more than 400 cases of disappearances to President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumara tunga urging her to bring those responsible to justice.... The situation is reminiscent of the mid-1980s. Between 1983 and mid1987, we recorded 860 disappearances in the area, nearly all of whom are still unaccounted for. Now we have 600 in one year." the President is not only watching an ethnic cleansing of the Tamil people taking place by the armed forces, but also condoning these atrocities as well.

I was one of the founder members of the International Committee against Disappearances(ICAD) when it was formed in Istambul in May 1996, I can say with humility and confidence, that the collective physical and spiritual strength of this assembly in Bogota and in such other countries where internal repression, torture and disappearances take place, ICAD not only exposes the conscience of the planners and perpetrators of these grave crimes against humanity, but also ignites a spark that will rekindle the lamp of truth and action in the parents and families of the disappeared. In order to raise public awareness in the hearts and minds of the civilian population of such countries to expose the planners and perpetrators of such heinous crimes they should to be brought through the United Nations human rights machinery before an international criminal court.

We, Tamils-in-exile in the United Kingdom, wish the ICAD Conference in Bogota, Colombia, all success; and urge that the next conference may be held in Sri Lanka, as discussed at the Koln Conference last year.

I am deeply grateful for my compassionate friend Rod Wooden who volunteered to read this statement on our behalf.

Victory to global freedom struggle.

Women Academics

Champions of Women's Rights or Masters of Disguise?

by Kothai

Academics are one species, above all others, who have shown themselves to be masters of disguise. While parading around as the upholders of knowledge and wisdom, they have become increasingly adept at creating elaborate obstacles to prevent ordinary people from discovering the truth. I hazard a guess that even they are confused by their own riddles and have lost the way to the truth a long, long time ago.

Take for example, Radhika Coomaraswamy. Disguised as a champion of women in her role as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, we might expect her to talk about the terrible gang rape and the sexual torture of women during this time of war. We might expect her to condemn the army for its brutality. Yet strangely she appears to speak about compassion and tolerance. Could she seriously be suggesting that women should be tolerant of sexual torture and compassionate about gang rape?

The truth that the rest of us can see is that women in Sri Lanka have chosen to fight instead of sitting passively as victims. It isn't hard to understand the intelligent decision of once highly oppressed Tamil women to take up arms against persecution. An eye witness account that is representative of the thousands of witnesses of human destruction since the start of the war tells the story clear enough:

"some men were dragging two girls by their long hair. I recognised them as two sisters living further away. The elder Tamil girl was eighteen years old and the younger one eleven years. They were brought just near my house. The mob gathered around them and started conferring. Apparently they were discussing what to do with the girls. Then one man pulled the younger girl by the hand and started chopping her with a knife.

I stared in horror. The elder girl was speechless and looked as if she had been turned into a statue. Then suddenly she fell on her knees and begged them not to harm her little sister, amidst the insane derisive laughter from the men. Then, one of the men took an axe and chopped the head off the younger girl. The elder girl looked dumbfounded. The mixed feelings of incalculable fear and horror, which she had just experienced when her little sister was killed brutally were replaced by a vague sense of helpless impassivity. She did not protest when the men stripped her of her clothes violently. She was impervious not only to the pain inflicted on her, but also, in her innocent ignorance, felt no shame at the irreparable humiliation forced on her. It was only after about twenty men had raped her that one of the men cautioned the others and shook her up roughly. She began to scream and struggle and looked all round her and realized for the first time she was bleeding. I made an effort and continued to be a helpless onlooker. She suddenly clenched her fists and then with a sudden look of helpless surrender on her face she looked up at the sky and began to mutter under her breath. She let off a sigh and swooned into unc'onsciousness. The men then poured petrol over her and burnt her. This was the second time in a day that I had seen a person being burnt alive." *(SRI LANKA: Island of Terror Thornton and Nithiyananthan. Anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983)*

Radhika Coomarasamy

After reading this there is no doubt in my mind why there are more than 3,000 women fighting in the LTTE today. To me, this signals a mass response towards survival, towards the human instinct of self preservation that has turned itself into a unique huge movement of grass roots women.

The LTTE's social justice movement is based on matriarchal principles of ancient Tamil culture, and the wisdom of more than 3,500 years of hard learned lessons in fighting patriarchal Aryan conquerors. Its internal politics and ideology, rooted in Tamil identity, has thus been favourable to the growth and development of powerful women's brigades, who are openly admired by the entire Tamil community, men and women alike, for their strength, courage and intelligence.

The women fighters who clamoured to be allowed to join the LTTE have challenged all received notions of

"Women Tigers: probably the most potent force for women's emancipation . . ."

limits to women's power. They have adopted neither the mother's role, nor the wife's, nor any role of sexual subservience to men. Their actions have taken the form of militant womanhood, fighting for the life of the community, the most progressive concept yet to enter the field of women's emancipation.

But academics, who are a class apart, have unfortunately not been free to believe in what they see. Saturated in colonial institutions, owing their livelihoods and status to imperialist ventures, they have been unable to transcend the grip of Western propaganda. Psychologically colonised, Radhika Coomeraswamy and her like, expose through words and actions an inability to love their own people and and a failure to be passionate about the emergence of fresh dynamic life from within their own culture. Instead they look to the failing West for guidance.

But the foundation for women's liberation will not be found here because there is nothing liberating about being seen, and desiring to be seen as a permanent sex object. Whether a woman in the West is feminist or otherwise, she considers one of the best compliments is to have someone say she looks sexy.

On that point alone it seems to me that every enlightened woman in Asia must see that the model of Western feminism is a sham. The women's movement in Europe and the US betrayed women from its inception because it was fuelled by expanding commercial interests, not by true liberating values. Those interests required women to turn to addictions and obsessions so that they could become the superconsumers of the twentieth century and offer themselves as markets for useless products. The vices of smoking and drinking that had already rendered working class men impoverished and powerless, were adopted wholesale by Western feminists as a mark of militancy, so too was obsessiveness about sex. No woman escaped unharmed.

Using sexiness to sell everything from ice cream to antiperspirant, the food and pharmaceutical industries, like cancerous monsters, took total control of the West's so-called women's liberation movement, leaving women confused and fighting from a no-win platform. The result has been that, instead of liberating women from rape, and other forms of sexual subjugation, Western feminism has delivered women deeper into their prison. Unfortunately many here believe the illusion, thinking that they are more free, even if that freedom is only to buy more things more hours of the day.

The naivety and ignorance of the Asian academics who use Western sex stereotyping to analyse and attack their own gender's liberation movement is inexusable, however. With so many women's lives at stake in their own country it is hard to witness the pomp and self righteousness with which they glibly transform Western feminism into world feminism in order to win the ideological battle to subjugate indigenous women's militancy.

The women Tigers are a pure home-grown women's liberation movement that is probably the most potent force for women's emancipation in the world. Yet the authoritarian academics' colonised minds have not been able to recognise the potential for strength and freedom from within their own culture.

They are victims of the patriarchal colonial system which recognises academic hot air, rather than down to earth reality. Their fancy titles cannot mask from intelligent eyes their own failure to bring change or halt the increasing viciousness and brutality of State forces. Manipulated as they are, with Western funding and recognition, they are well and truly humiliated victims of slavery.

Note: On 21st May 1997 the Associated French Press reported the gang rape of a 35 year old Tamil woman by Sri Lankan police in the district of Batticaloa. According to the report they later killed her by exploding a hand grenade near her genitals.

The ITF Symposium and Prof. Wilson

A Critique of the Symposium organised by the International Tamil Foundation at Dryburgh Hall, Putney on Sunday 29 June 1997

The international Tamil Foundation organised a well attended symposium to coincide with their annual lunch, on Sunday 29 June 1997. The symposium was, unfortunately, titled " The Plight of the Tamil Nation". I do not agree with the word "plight" in the title. This word means "predicament", "usually of a distressing kind". I do not believe that we Tamils are in any sort of a "predicament". True, our brothers and sisters in Eelam are at the brutal receiving end of a Sinhala war of attrition but we will win because our cause is just. We know what we have to do and we are doing it. We are in no plight or predicament !

The ITF had invited Prof Wilson and Mr Adrian Wijemanne as their keynote speakers. The other speakers were, Fr. Emmanual, Vicar General of the Roman Catholic Church in Jaffna and Rev. Daniel Thiagarajah of the Church in Jaffna, both of whom had come from the war zone in Eelam; and Vasantha Rajah, a man well known and respected, by the concerned Tamil community in Britain. All three of whom made very valuable contributions

by
Charles Somasundrum

This critique is limited to the contribution of the two keynote speakers ie Professor Wilson and Mr Wijemanne.

Let me take Prof Wilson's contribution first. I did not agree with much of what Prof Wilson had to say. But then, that was his viewpoint and he was entitled to it. It would be foolish on our part were we ever to block our minds from the views of others.

I must, however, take issue with Prof Wilson on three specific areas on which he touched.

ISSUE 1:. Prof Wilson contends that LTTE leader Pirabakaran's lack of a working knowledge of English, precludes his holding his own at an international conference. He appeared to take it for granted that English (or American) and no other language, was the lingua franca of international communication. I agree that quite a few of the world's leaders speak it quite well. I am certain, however, that in his attendance at conferences and seminars and in watching television or listening to the radio, Professor Wilson would have noticed that though quite a few of the world's leaders speak English(American) quite well, yet others can barely make themselves understood in that language. Quite a few of the world leaders would rather speak in their own mother tongue. The recent handover ceremony in Hong Kong is a case in point. The President of China, Jiang Zemin spoke in Mandarin while the Prince of Wales spoke in English. Boris Yeltsin of Russia is another leader of his country who speaks only in his own mother tongue.

Surely Prof Wilson, in today's world, the language one uses to express one's views or deepest convictions does not matter. There are, today, interpreters and advanced technology, simultaneous translation systems that see to that. What matters is what one has to say.

Pirabakaran has proved himself to be not only a brilliant military tactician but also an equally brilliant and humane administrator This is borne out by some of the organisations he has established for the citizens of Eelam like, "Chencholai" (an organisation for the care of war orphans), TEEDOR (an organisation for the economic development of Eelam) and the TRO (an organisation for the rebuilding of war scorched Eelam and the rehabilitation of it's citizens) I have been to LTTE-run Jaffna some years back and have seen at first hand the efficient running of the civilian inffa structures by the LTTE.

May I remind you Prof Wilson, Pirabakaran can easily hold his own among the world's leaders on his moral standing alone. His ability to express himself in English is a secondary matter

ISSUE: 2. Prof Wilson said at one stage that since Pirabakaran was wanted by the Indian Government for the murder of Rajiv Gandhi he was hamstrung in his dealings with the world's leaders May I point out that the Indian Government has yet to establish, which organisation it was that was responsible for the assassination of Gandhi. To date, no organisation has been charged. Pirabakaran's part in the assassination of Gandhi has never been established. Rather, vague allegations have been used in a PR exercise against the LTTE by the Indian and Sri Lankan governments.

Not all that long ago, Menachem Begin was prime minister of Israel . It is well known that he was a senior coordinator with Irgun Zvai Leumi who, in association with the Sternists (or Stern Gang as they were better known) were responsible for the assassination of Lord Moyne, British Minister of State in Cairo, in November 1944. Subsequently, on the 22 July 1946, they were responsible for the blowing up of a wing of King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which contained the British Government and military offices, at a cost of 91 British lives. There is also the example of Nelson Mandela who was held in Roben Island on charges of sabotage and terrorism.

ISSUE:3 Professor Wilson made a strange remark about "intellectuals". I hope I misheard him but I do have the distinct impression that he appeared to equate an "intellectual" with English language speakers with extra initials before and after their names. This is sadly true, particularly, of us Sri Lankans. We have this unnatural respect for paper qualifications. For example, a medical doctor with just the basic MBBS qualification and therefore, the title Dr. before his name, is looked upon as some sort of an intellectual, even though he may never have read a book for pleasure or, for that matter, read any book other than his medical text books.

There is also, this strange belief among us Sri Lankans of a certain age, casting back to the time of our erstwhile colonial administrators, that if a person could not speak English, he had to be illiterate. Also, there is the tendency among some of us, to equate academic qualification with knowledge or expertise. Believe me, I know quite a few ignorant graduates and Phds for that matter

May I point out that there are countless numbers of our brothers and sisters in the war front in Eelam, who have had the right motivation and knowledge but who have sacrificed a future in the academic world or in one of the professions, to fight for us and the freedom of our dear motherland. Does this mean that they are not intellectuals ? I would like to draw the attention of Professor Wilson to a book that was being sold outside the hall where the symposium was held. The book is titled "Tamil Eelam Literature". There is a brief but excellent foreword by Pirabakaran, which would put quite a few "intellectuals" among us to shame. I would, however, like to quote from the editor's note at page I . "Armed young men and women carry in their bags pen and paper. Occasionally, when they find the time, on moon-lit nights, their feelings are put on paper. A few collections of their writings have seen the light of day. "

The bulk of the contributions in this anthology, have been written in Tamil and have been translated into English. Even though a great deal has been lost in the translation one can see the seeds of intellectual creativity in these works. In my book, these are the intellectuals of the Eelam nation. Not the paper qualified, English speaking academics.

Adrian Wijemanne made a very useful contribution. His background as a historian and as a civil servant, particularly his stint as a Deputy Land Commissioner in Sri Lanka, coupled with his rational, liberal and humane outlook, enables him to see the blatant racialism of the Sinhala people. I am at present, reading his book "War and Peace in Post Colonial Ceylon 1948-1991". I recommend this book to all persons interested in learning about the history of our struggle.

I have, however, one bone to pick with him. He referred to the Tamil army of Eelam as "guerrilla forces". When asked to elucidate, at question time, he continued to assert that these were "guerrilla forces" which no doubt, in time, would develop into Freedom Fighters. The Oxford Dictionary defines "guerrilla (n)" as "irregular war waged independentally by small bodies ". The Tiger Fighters of Eelam are certainly not "small bodies" engaged in an "irregular war". These are the fighters who defeated the powerful Indian army and more recently, over ran and captured the heavily fortified government camp at Mullaitivu. I would refer him to Adele Ann's book "Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers". This gives eye witness accounts of some of the major Tiger battles in which the women fighters took part. No! Mr Wijemanne, the Tamil forces may have been guerrilla fighters 20 years ago. They are now, a well disciplined and battle seasoned army, against whom the better equipped and numerically superior Sinhala forces have not been able to make much headway. They are the army of Eelam.

May I thank the international Tamil Foundation for inviting the public to their annual lunch and the Symposium and for inviting as speakers, persons with whom we may not agree but who are thought provoking.

LTTE's Video Cassette
The latest

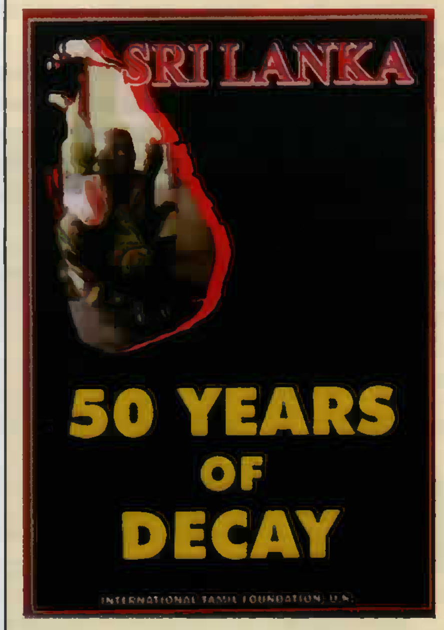
ஒளிவீச்சு
OLIVEECHU

The LTTE's monthly video cassettes for September and October 1996 have now been released internationally as a combined 3-hour issue of Oliveechu.

Produced by LTTE's film unit "Nidharshanam", the cassette features among other things, an LTTE attack in Batticaloa,(taken live) pictures of the deserted army base in Poonakari, a Sea Tiger attack in Trincomalee, and a short film produced in Tamil soil. The cassette also shows remembrance ceremonies in honour of the late Thileepan and Lt.Colonels Pulendran and Kumarappa.

The LTTE cassettes are available for sale at all LTTE outlets and at the International Secretariat. London.

Tel: + 44 (0) 171 403 4554



This is a 60-page booklet published by the International Tamil Foundation containing specially written articles by Professor C.J.Eliezer, Adrian Wijemanne, Professor A.Jeyaratnam Wilson and Professor Chelvadurai Manogaran, with a foreword by S.Sivanayagam.

Priced at £ 2.50, it is available at the I.T.F. office, 816, Garratt Lane, London SW17 OLZ.

Postage: UK & EC -50p

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Sri Lanka: Stop the disappearances

A meeting hosted by the International Committee Against Disappearances, Saturday 5th July, Toynbee Hall, U.K.

MADURA RASARATNAM reports:

The meeting was well attended by people from oppressed nations all over the world. There were representatives from Chile, Colombia, Turkey and Kurdistan. British and Sinhalese people also came to show support for the Disappeared in Tamil Eelam, but as an Eelam Tamil it saddened me that there weren't more Tamils who came to show solidarity with their own people.

The intended main speaker, Shiroman, who was to speak on behalf of the progressive Sinhalese magazine, HIRU, was unable to attend. Shiroman was intending to come to Britain via Germany, but the German authorities had refused to grant him a visa on the grounds that "he had no roots in Sri Lanka" and that he may try to put down roots in Germany ! His speech, the first part of which described how it came to be that Shiroman, a Sinhalese, and many like him lost their roots in Sri Lanka, was delivered by his friend and colleague, Hiran, presently in Paris.

Shiroman, in his text, described the horrors unleashed by the authoritarian and repressive Sri Lankan State, between 1987 and 1990 on the Sinhalese forces of discontent in the south. The movement was spearheaded by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP - Peoples' Liberation Front) which also opposed the Indian military presence in the island. The Tamil national struggle was at that time being throttled by the "IPKF", while the Sri Lankan army was deployed to the south with the license to kill, helped by the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The State's machinery of terror systematically hunted down supporters and sympathizers of the JVP, and often made gruesome displays of the bodies, to send a message to other potential voices of discontent. In 1987, Shiroman was a second year university student and became part of an organisation called Students for Human Rights (SHR), whose policies on the UNP regime and the Indian intervention were similar to those of the JVP. The main function of SHR was to collect and document the evidence of the violent repression of Sinhalese State terror against the Sinhala people. By 1990 it became apparent that it was no longer safe for him to remain in Sri Lanka and Shiroman was forced to leave the island and seek political asylum in France. He was to return to Sri Lanka when the State terror against Sinhalese abated.

INDIAN ARMY
OUT FROM
SRI LANKA
J.V.P.

The movement of which he had been a part was inclusive of a broad spectrum of ideologies including some with Marxist sentiments and others who opposed Indian intervention from a nationalistic and almost chauvinistic standpoint. Whereas HIRU has taken a stand supporting the Tamil people's right to self-determination and therefore opposing the war of the Sinhala State against the Tamil people, many of the Sinhala forces which fought against State terrorism are today held back by feelings of Sinhala chauvinism. Because of this stand, HIRU faced severe financial constraints and for a while, closure. It now appears in a monthly form and as a brave and progressive force fighting Sinhala imperialism over the Tamil Nation, it deserves the moral and financial support of Eelam Tamils living in Britain.

There followed a period of discussion in which important points were raised by participants from the floor.. **One significant difference between the Sri Lankan State's war against the Tamil nation and the dissent in the south is the precision with which attacks are carried out. In the war in the North and East, all Tamils irrespective of political allegiances are targeted through aerial bombardments, indiscriminate shelling, rape and arbitrary arrests and torture. The Sri Lankan State's campaign in the South, while being equally ruthless and violent, was much more specifically targeted: only those suspected of campaigning against the Sri Lankan regime got "disappeared", tortured, killed and made a public example of. The war against the Tamils in the north and east is racist and anti-Tamil as opposed to violent repression of a particular ideology. It is the act of a would be imperialist power trying to subjugate a separate nation.**

Deidre McConnel described the present realities faced by Tamils living in the war zone. She referred to the rape and murder of Krishanthy Kuma rasamy and her mother and brother, the continuous displacement and the extreme State-engineered poverty experienced by Tamils in the Vanni, the rape and subsequent murder of the young mother Koneswary Murugesa pillai of Batticaloa. This harsh, grave reality, she said, is something which is not yet acknowledged by the outside world.

As Tamils we must inform ourselves and then others; we must also support Sinhala progressive forces, such as HIRU,who are addressing the reality in a climate where it would be easier to ignore the truth. It is imperative that we, in Britain, with access to people with decisionmaking powers, also acknowledge the reality and then take the responsibility to change it.

Help stop the war in Sri Lanka

Rev.Fr.S.J.Emmanuel at Sicilian Conference

The Siracusa (Italy) Conference on Peace

A 2-day Conference on Peace -"Educazione Alla Pace" was held in Siracusa, Sicily, Italy on June 20 and 21st.The Conference was convened by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr.Bruno Scicta, and was attended by Sicilian leaders, government officials, writers and representatives of several countries.

The first day of the conference was addressed by Rev. Fr.Rutta of Tanzania, and representaives of Kurdistan, Palestine, while leading Italian TV personality spoke of the bitter ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and emphasized the need for a strong peace effort in that country.

Among the speakers on the second day were Rohan Karunaratne from Sri Lanka and Rev.Fr.S.J.Emmanuel representing Tamil Eelam. Fr.Emmanuel also participated in the 5th Annual Tamil Cultural Festival held in Palermo on the 22nd.

Here are excerpts of his address at the Siracusa conference:

■ I come to this Congress with a genuine thirst for Peace because I am coming from a prolonged context of war. The war that is raging in Sri Lanka has been surreptitiously and mysteriously named as a "War for Peace" by the Government of Sri Lanka. But in reality it has consumed the lives of almost 60,000 citizens, mostly from my ethnic community called the Tamils and has caused enormous destruction of properties for my people and forced almost 800,000 people to be displaced within the country and an equal number in many countries of the world, including Italy In a special manner I recall to mind in this Convention, the 232 Tamils who were drowned in the seas around Siracusa - people who were fleeing the atrocities in their land of birth to seek a home for survival and security. As it goes, the war is hastening a genocide of the Tamil people and leading the country towards a national suicide.

■ As a Catholic Priest, with the responsibility of a Vicar General for the Diocese of Jaffna, the heart of the war-zone, I have lived through 50 years of the post-colonial history in Sri Lanka. This period has seen the gradual deterioration of a multi-ethnic reality into an ethnic conflict, and later, on account of the failure of successive governments as well as of political, social and religious leaders of the country, of becoming a spiral of violence and war. The present war has all signs of heading towards a national disaster, a national suicide, if not arrested to a peaceful halt and solution with the help of the international community. Hence my participation in this Convention is not with a purely academic or philanthropical interest of peace in the world, but a more practical interest of saving my

A.S.P.E.I.
A.P.I.T. Siracusa
IX CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE
"L' EDUCAZIONE ALLA PACE"
Siracusa 20 - 21 Giugno 1997
CONFCOM

country and my people from a national disaster.

Besides learning from other parts of the world burning with similar conflicts, I hope to bring here also my contribution, by way of my experience of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and by way of my religious reflection. It may be seen also as a theological reflection on a human and political experience of thirsting for peace from amidst a situation of war!.

■ Through my personal experience in the midst of a struggle of my people for their basic human rights, I have witnessed the role of politicians who fuelled conflicts for their own gains and governments which betrayed the rights of its own people for staying in power. I have witnessed the most inhuman violations of human rights taking place in my country; how political leaders lie to their own people, how guardians of law and order terrorise my people, rape and murder them in cold blood and how even respected religious leaders fail to witness to the truth of their religions and fall into a brand of fanaticism that nourishes hatred and fuels wars.

In this context of a false leadership leading the country to destruction, it is incumbent on all peace-loving people not to leave peace-building merely to politicians, but to contribute in ways proper to them their own contribution. Religious leaders have a key role to play and they must not delay or desist.

■ Sri Lanka, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, the Paradise of the Holiday-maker, the meeting-point of world's four major religions (Buddhism 66%; Hinduism 18% Islam 8% and Christianity 7.5%), populated with Sinhalese (74%) and Tamils (24%) who speak two very old and clearly distinct languages and inherit very old cultures. In short, it is an island blessed with a beautiful landscape of beaches, mountains and forests, with a tropical holiday-climate, deeply religious atmosphere and cultural heritage's - but caught in this war, it is now a paradise that is burning !

Those of us who aspire Peace must accept and acknowledge how we have reached this situation of violence and war whereby this paradise is burning. Peace cannot be achieved unless we are involved in a Peace-process of de-constructing war. Those who cry for a pseudo-peace or a blanket-peace in a selfish manner in order to continue with their own life not attending to the injustices that caused the violence and war are not genuine peace-makers.

Constructive efforts for peace-building presupposes a sincere acceptance of what went wrong and paved the way for violence and war. Denying history or the root causes of a conflict or even hiding history will not help in achieving peace.

In Sri Lanka there is an effort made to deny or cover up even the history of the island for the last fifty years, deny the blunders of the Government and the series of discriminations inflicted on the Tamils and speak only of a much later development of the spiral of violence as Tamil terrorism. This false propaganda of the government fighting only terrorism at home may enable the Government to get easily the finance and the weapons from the major powers of the world threatened by pure terrorists, but will not help solve the problem nor take us anywhere near peace. This approach will only aggravate the situation towards disaster.

■ In 1956, with the making of Sinhala as the only official language of the whole country and the subsequent series of discriminations against the Tamils in education, employment, settlement etc., the Tamils, the so called minorities, were oppressed. and their democratic and non-violent protests were put down with military force and political arrogance. After 20 years of fruitless suffering death and destruction in the hands of the majority Sinhalese, the Tamil leaders decided almost unanimously to demand a separate state for the Tamils to avoid further degeneration of the situation. and the Tamil youth took to arms in self defence, in disappointment with parliamentary democracy as practised by the permanent Sinhala-majority in Sri Lanka, and against the oppressive military. The anti-Tamil riots of 1983 was the climax when thousands of Tamils were killed, burnt alive and their properties destroyed. It was the beginning of a spiral of violence between state-terrorism and Tamil counter-terrorism. Now it has become a war between the State Forces and the Tamil Tigers.

■ With the coming to power the present President Chandrika promised "no more war, only peace" but in reality, she is waging the most destructive war in our history. The hope of the Tamils quickly vanished, and the country has fallen from the frying pan into the fire. The Talks between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam failed to achieve anything for many reasons. With an unjustifiable and inhuman economic blockade hanging over the Tamils and with an Army that is not prepared to implement even gazetted decisions of the Government, no talks with the Government can succeed. With the breakdown of Talks, the Government at first launched a "War for Peace" on the Tamils from the 7th.of June 1995 and later, when the Tamils were fleeing for their safety into the jungles, put out a political package to be discussed by the Sinhalese.

The Government is prosecuting a war that costs 29% of the country's national budget. It is indirectly supported by some western powers and their international financial agents like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. During the last two years alone, many thousands of civilians have been bombed out of existence using Italian planes, British pilots and American Green Berets;

While the individual violations have become the concern of many of the international and local human rights organisations and many human rights commissions and task forces are set up by the Government to inquire and save face before the world, there is a serious indifference and silence of the international community over the more grievous violations of the collective human rights of a people for survival and self-determination .

■ Under the pretext of targeting the bases of Tamil Tigers, the Government has carried on for several years and still carrying on, a series of aerial attacks and artillery shelling, even at night, in which thousands of civilians and their properties have been destroyed. I am a witness of the bombing of at least two of the Roman Catholic Churches in Jaffna in which more than 150 died on the spot and of a school at Nagar Kovil in which 29 young students died in their school uniforms.

Why is the world that rightly expresses shock and condemnation about a single incident of a bomb in Colombo, or in Oklahoma, notoriously silent about the hundreds of bombs dropped and the thousands of artillery shells fred, even at nights, over the Tamils?

■ While proudly telling the world that they are sending food and medicine to the Tamil regions, an inhuman economic blockade is in force for the last six years, In addition, for many more years, the people are denied proper media communication, transport, electricity and other facilities for life. While pretending to send a small fraction of the normal requirements for food and medicine, the people are facing starvation and sickness.

Why is the world not crying halt to an abuse of food and medicine and other basic facilities for life as a weapon of war to weaken the will of a people for their survival and self-determination ?

■ The hundreds of cases of rape and murder carried on by the military in unspeakable forms, is a scandal for the whole civilised world. We will not speak of them here. But there is historic rape of another order that should be condemned by the world.

With a massive military offensive that started in June 1995 under the title "War for Peace" the State Forces captured Jaffna and chased away 500,000 inhabitants from the historic capital Jaffna. The burning down of the Public Library in Jaffna by the Sinhala Police Force in 1982, the destruction of more than 80 of the houses in Jaffna, the destruction of all historic monuments in the city including the war-memorial of those fallen in war, the cutting down of thousands of coconut and palmyrah trees - all these amount to a rape of the city of Jaffna.

■ Under the guise of protecting military strategy, the Government has imposed a media blockade over the North of the country for the last two years. No local or international journalists are allowed to go into the war zone and tell the world of the death, destruction and displacements taking place. The war and the economic blockade is going on behind closed-doors.

People in the South of Sri Lanka and the world know exactly what is going on in Bosnia, Rwanda or Jerusalem but not what crimes are taking place in the North of Sri Lanka for so many years.

■ The role of Politicians, Social Workers, Media Personnel, Human Rights and Peace Organisations etc. cannot be exaggerated. They have a serious responsibility for truth, sincerity and justice. A greater part of humanity is dying and groaning in pain because of selfish politicians, commercial handling of truth and lack of work-ethics and moral conscience among many of these leaders. Given my situation and experience, I like to comment a little on the role of religious leaders and the international community.

■ The religions are all preaching love, understanding, peace etc. But in reality how many religious leaders are actively involved in practising or building up this love among the people. How many religious leaders stand up for the values they preach. They preach loudly and condemn loudly but they are silent about witnessing to those values!

In fact we are all concerned not only about the silence that is conniving with the war for peace, but more concerned about the Buddhist leaders who cry for a militaristic approach to the ethnic problem. With a Mahavamsa mind set, the Buddhist leaders are encouraging a Sinhala Buddhist ownership of the whole island and cry for a war against the Tamils who are mostly Hindus. In fact, a well learned Buddhist leader in an interview has expressly stated that Sri Lanka is a Sinhala Buddhist land denying the multi ethnic multi religious composition of the population but also has suggested a military end to the Tamil problem,

■ Religions are called to play their roles based on (I) the convictions of their faiths (2) according to the structures of their communities.

All religions preach love reconciliation forgiveness etc. No religion preaches hatred and revenge. But in situations of cold war the role is determined by how much deeper is one's faith, how much that faith is closer to human life or closer to the temple and so on.

Another factor determining the role and contribution of a religion is its structure. For example Buddhism has a monastic and a communitary-leadership with its organs for humanitarian services to humanity. Hinduism, as a peoples' religion without a priestly or a hierarchical leadership has also charitable organisations. In a slightly different manner, Christianity is called to do humanitarian services but not only that. A prophetic role is of its essence. In a world of injustice and conflict, it has to proclaim the truth that liberates, and work for justice without counting the cost.

The great temptation for the church in Sri Lanka is to limit its work for peace to mere humanitarian services and refrain from standing up for the truth and justice called by the horrors of war

If you want peace become a peace-maker. If you want to be a peace-maker, then become peace! This is the message of a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist called Nakthan from Paris.

Condemnation of violence has become for many a type of hypocritical self-praise or higher than thou attitude. The people who condemn violence think of themselves as morally just and clean and distance themselves from acts of violence and their causes. They do not consider their own share of blame and guilt in the acts of violence. They do not want to examine the history, the development and the root causes of the violence. If they search for the cause then they will find their share of blame. So they all cry loud for the extermination of the "terrorists". What will happen if we attempt to put out evil this world by killing off every evil-doer?

■ Former colonial masters were part of the problem. They organised or restructured governments according to their advantage and left the county without suffcient assurance of security for the minorities

Donor countries which give aid for development with one hand do sell arms and weapons and write off their old weapons as aid to third world countries, with the other

In the international organisations, although the truth emerges and violations of human rights become very clear, they do not have the courage to forgo a friendship. In taking decisions to force a country into peaceful ways, a "club-mentality" of"you scratch my back, I yours" prevail.

■ Our own rights will be respected only to the extent that we recognise and value the rights of others. The Sinhalese as the majority citizens of Sri Lanka and Buddhism as a religion of the majority, deserve privilege and greater attention. But this should not be at the expense of denying the rights to others.

The Tamils have lived for more than two thousand years in that country and they cannot be considered a minority with less rights. They are a nation in their own right.

■ We are created by the same God and we have inherited freely from him a particular ethnicity and also a gift of faith. Both are from God. We are called to be loyal but not fanatics of any of them. Living the supernatural in the context of the natural habitat given to us and with the cultural heritages given to us, our responsibility. At the same time the faith that we confess must be the light and measure of our activities.

Hence there is a need to harmonise our natural origin with our supernatural faith and move both our human resources as well as our supernatural resources for the work of Peace. In countries where all the citizens belong to one race and one religion, the problem of ethnic or religious conflict will not emerge. But in multi-ethnic and multi-religious situations, as in Sri Lanka, it is very important to harmonise ethnicity and religion without falling into any fanaticism.

■ Peace cannot co-exist with War and Violence. Peace cannot be built on hiding the truth of history and denying the basic rights of a people. Peace cannot be built on injustice and discriminations

Peace can be achieved only on the recognition of the human rights of all. This is not an utopia. It can be realised when politicians, religious leaders, media, and other organisations rise above selfishness and insincerity and work together with a super-natural motivation

In my country we all are thirsting for Peace. Many are waiting for it to dawn on them like a morning dew. Few are actively searching for it. And still very few are making Peace.

On behalf of my people, I appeal to the international Community, especially the bigger powers who fnance and provide weapons, to help stop the war, to help stop the aerial bombing and shelling, to help lift the economic embargo on us, to open our regions to media personnel, and to help initiate talks towards peace. ☐

JAYEWARDENE'S YEARS OF POWER

A Contemporary Assessment (1987)

S.Sivanayagam

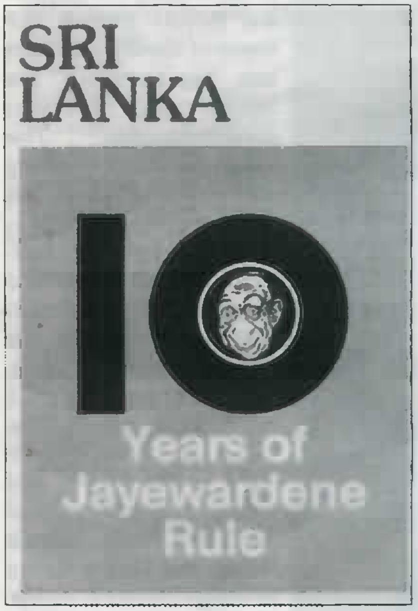
The fact that a 7-year political dormancy separated Junius Richard Jayewardene's years of power and his death at the age of 90 may have had something to do with the charitable references, and the flattering obituaries and cosmetic acclaim that he earned at his death.

Public memory being what it is, short, and often selective, HOT SPRING brings to its readers the seventh part of a contemporary assessment and narrative of Jayewardene's years of power, written and published in 1987.

IN a 40-page booklet, titled 10 YEARS OF JAYEWARDENE RULE, the author S. Sivanayagam covered the years 1977 - 1987, and records a chunk of history that was both dark and depressing, and illustrative of the ignoble style of Jayewardene's governance.

Part VII

(Continued from previous issues)



The Thimphu phase & Fall -out

President Jayewardene announced a Ceasefire beginning June 18. But that had nothing to do with Delhi; he had an eye on Paris where the Sri Lanka Aid Consortium was meeting on the 20th. (it is customary for the government to develop an insatiable thirst for peace every year around this time). The Tamil militants accepted the Ceasefire "in deference Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's wishes", said TULF leader Amirthalingam in Madras. It was suddenly announced that the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu would be the venue for secret talks between the Sri Lankan government delegation and the Tamil groups - TULF, LTTE, EROS, TELO, EPRLF and PLOT. A marked reluctance of the Tigers to make the journey to Thimphu was soon set right; an Indian journalist reported that they were being "frog-marched". In Jaffna, where the action really is, a massive protest was mounted against militants' participation at Thimphu. People there thought it was an act of Himalayan folly.

Came July, and Thimphu which to most of the participants was as unknown a place as Timbuctoo, was invested with special security and secret importance. India Today's Madras correspondent S.H.Venkatramani who at this time developed a sudden desire to sample the tourist attractions of this Himalayan capital was himself "frogmarched" from his hotel room to the helipad. The climate there was otherwise bracing, but the absence of LTTE leader Prabhakaran was noted with concern. On the other hand, the presence of the out-of-the-blue outspoken, TELO spokesman Nadesan Satyendra was also noted with equal concern. The mountain climate produced one notable result - the cross-grained Tamil groups arrived at a rare, refreshing unanimity to present a 4-point charter as a basis for negotiations: 1. Recognition of a separate

Nadesan Satyendra

Tamil national identity; 2. Respect for the integrity of the Tamil traditional homeland; 3. Recognition of the Tamil right to self-determination; 4. Citizenship rights to all Tamils who have made Sri Lanka their home. The President's brother Harry Jayewardene, a legal expert, who led the Lankan delegation did not only reject the four points totally but questioned the credentials of the Tamil side in raising the fourth point. Although some hopes were raised in Colombo that Phase 11 of the Thimphu parleys scheduled for August 12 would result in an agreement, and President Jayewardene was himself quoted as saying: "Come what may, there will be peace in December", the situation on the ground, both political and military, could not have encouraged any-compromise unless the President was prepared to risk his political future. *Iqbal Athas* in Colombo, in his despatch to Sunday Times, London (28 July) said :

"The dynamic for a settlement has largely been provided by the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who is reported to have threatened the guerrillas with arrest and the closure of their bases in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu ..."

The obstructions to any political settlement, beginning with the torpedoing of the Bandaranaike-Chelva nayakam Pact of July 1957, had always come from the Sinhala side; to hope that Indian pressure on the guerrillas could force a decision was to miss the point altogether. In fact, a very powerful Sinhala lobby was already being built up demanding that Jayewardene abandon the Thimphu dialogue, led by influential members of the Buddhist clergy - the Mahanayake Thero of the Asgiriya Chapter, Ven. Madhihe Pannasseha and Ven. Sobitha - and backed by Mrs. Bandaranaike herself. Indian policy perceptions were flawed, at that stage, by an inadequate appreciation of this same point. What was called for, was not the exerting of pressure on the Tamil militants merely because the leadership was based on Indian soil and therefore vulnerable. The answer did not lie in twisting President Jayewardene's arms either. If Indian policy makers thought that the aging President could be persuaded to offer, and implement, a reasonable political settlement in keeping with the bottom-line aspirations of the Tamil people, they should help Mr. Jayewardene to face, and overcome opposition on his own side of the ethnic fence. In other words, the pressures should be aimed directly at the Sinhala constituency. The recent parachuting of food and medicine in Jaffna, accompanied by the violation of Sri Lankan air space by Indian Mirages, was, whatever some sections of Indian opinion think, a step in the right direction.

Viewed in this perspective, the series of policy measures adopted by Delhi, beginning with the "frog- marching" of the Tigers to Thimphu, the deportation orders on LTTE theoretician and spokesman *S.A. Balasingham,* TELO spokesman at Thimphu *Nadesan Satyendra* and the well-known Tamil Human Rights activist *S.C. Chandrahasan*, followed by the Tamilnadu police swoops on militant offices executed with what seemed attempts at deliberate humiliation, in November 1986, the seizing of the Tiger communication apparatus, and culminating in the pressures imposed on LTTE Prabhakaran at the Bangalore SAARC summit setting, had not only weakened the pathetic faith Tamils reposed on India, but had brought to no tangible returns to either solving the problem or in improving Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Indian hopes of achieving these two policy targets receded further. If as they say nothing succeeds like success, failures tend to bring in other complexities. Tamil disenchantment with India was becoming vocal in Jaffna, which had a long tradition of emotional dependence on India - the Indian polity as a whole, not just Tamilnadu, as incorrectly understood by North Indian opinion. "Mother India" was a phrase in common parlance, long before the Dravida movement took roots in the south. A letter addressed to Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi in August 1983 from "Eelam Tamils" (smuggled from Jaffna to Colombo and sent in the diplomatic pouch of a friendly embassy), said

.... We have been nourished by Indian culture and bred on Indian thought. Four hundred and fifty years of western colonialism did nothing to shake us from that sense of belonging to India. The Himalayas and the Ganges and the Mahabharata and Ramayana are very real to us, During the days of the British Empire our sense of identity with India was nearcomplete, the narrow strip of ocean notwithstanding. The Indian freedom movement was one in which we felt we were direct participants, The honour of inviting Mahatma Gandhi to Ceylon for the first time in 1927 belonged to the Youth Congress of Jaftna. Our affection for the Nehru family was so close that it was not an unusual sight, in the thirties and forties, to see portraits of Jawaharial Nehru, Kamala Nehru and Motilal Nehru in village homes in Jaffna. When Gandhiji died, we grieved in a way as only Indians would. When India became free, we rejoiced in it as if it was own freedom.. ." (For full text - TAMIL INFORMATION magazine, 15 November 1984).

It was the Jajjna youth Congress that invited Mahatma Gandhai to Ceylon in 1927

As was characteristic of the ten years of Jayewardene rule, with every passing year proving more disastrous than the previous one, the Tamils faced the worst in 1986. Constant massacres of Tamil civilians and intensified confrontations between Government forces and Tamil Tigers, both of which had a mutual rebound effect; depopulation of whole Tamil villages particularly in the East; incessant induction of arms and men into Tamil-majority areas; bombing; strafing; shelling, in which neither temples, nor churches, nor schools nor hospitals were spared - it was an unending trail of blood, terror, misery and human suffering. Even as the year began, a Colombo newspaper (Sun - 3.1.86) noted that Sri Lanka's prisons were getting overcrowded, with 66,500 unconvicted remand prisoners adding to the congestion. Another Colombo report said that 3,000 unemployed Sinhala youths between the ages of 18 and 22 have joined the Auxiliary Force, who after two weeks' training will receive a monthly salary of Rs. 3,400/- plus a risk allowance of Rs. 65/- per every kilometre foot patrol! In Jaffna, the President of the Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation said that according to documents maintained of "recorded" deaths, approximately 6,000 Tamils had been killed between 1977 and end of 1985, out of which roughly 2,000 were heads of households on whom their families had depended.

In Colombo, President Jayewardene told Indian Journalist Kuldip Nayar : "I shall have a military solution to what I believe is a military problem. After doing so, I shall tackle the political side". In a despatch to the Times, London (January 27, 1986), Kuidip Nayar writes from Delhi:

"President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka pins little hope on negotiations between his government and the Tamils but expects the Army to eliminate "violence" by the end of the year ....

"President Jayewardene admitted "indiscriminate killings of civilians" but saw no way out until the militant Tamils, described by him as killers and murderers, stopped fighting ....

"He was in buoyant and confident mood in sharp contrast to the figure of diffidence and worry a year ago when I last interviewed him, Asked what had happened to change his tone and tenor, he said : "I am winning the war"

"I find Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi more accommodating than his mother. He must do in Sri Lanka what he did in Punjab and Assam".

"President Jayewardene said India had privately admitted the existence of training camps and "some highly-placed men have offered their apology to me". He refused to divulge their names in spite of repeated questioning ..

"In addition to the increasing strength of his security forces, President Jayewardene also listed two other reasons for his confidence. Firstly, the level of Indian involvement had dropped. Now the Centre was not generally helping the militants, although Tamil Nadu continued to do so ....

"In any case, I have come to realise that only success matters. I do not care what New Delhi, London, or for that matter, any other country says", he said. How quickly and effectively I can exterminate the militants is the crux of the problem and I am on the point of achieving this".

to be conclued

Boat Dance!

S.L.Y. Promotions is a group of young Sri Lankan professionals who have come together to organise social activities where people of similar background to ourselves can meet and have the opportunity to gain strength and a sense of belonging ffom our own community and rich culture.

S.L.Y. Promotions is a non-political, non-profit making organisation, solely to provide an opportunity for young people to meet, socialise and promote a feeling of 'community' to those of us in Britain.

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9 p.m. - 1 a.m.

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CALLING FOR A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER

Eelam House requires a librarian to organise and run our library.

The work entails cataloguing and indexing our books and periodicals. Our library is essentially a reference library. It is not only intended to help Eelam House staff and the Tamil Community in general but also foreign research students as well.

The work atmosphere is very friendly and easy. We are one big family.

Previous experience would be useful but is not essential.

Please contact us on 0171 403 4554 or write to United Tamils Organisation, Eelam House, 202 Long Lane, London SEI 4QB

Stateless Nations & the World Community

Most of today's wars are civil wars. Most of the casualties are civilians sometimes "caught in the cross fire", but most often, victims of governments' efforts to suppress the rebellions through the use of unbridled terror.

According to the Oslo-based International Peace Research Institute, between1990 and 1995 there have been 97 such wars. Many are still continuing because the issues which gave rise to these wars remain unaddressed.

The International Peace Research Institute estimates the numbers killed to be five and a half million and the numbers displaced to be well over forty million. Inevitably there is the collapse of economies as Governments spend exponentially to maintain military supremacy over the rebels.

The overwhelming number of these "internal wars" are fought in pursuit of self-determination by smaller nations within states dominated by larger nations.

Examples include the war of independence waged by the Chechniyans against Russia, the Tamil uprising against the Sri Lankan Government, the Kurdish offensive against the Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish regimes, and closer home, the war by the Bougunvillians against the PNG Government, and the ongoing Timorese struggle against the Indonesian regime.

It is the collapse of artificial ideologies which held together diverse nations and often dominated by larger nations, which has led to many of these wars. The end of Communism gave rise to an explosion of several new states some through peaceful means, many through wars of secessions. Examples include the dismantling of the Soviet Union dominated by the Russian nation and the end of the Yugoslavian state dominated by the Serbian nation.

Similarly, the end of colonial rule gave rise to many states whose borders had been drawn by colonial rulers for their own administrative convenience with little regard to the differing ethnicity of the population.

As a result, some of the "States" which came into being, encompassed more than a single nation each, where the numerically larger nation dominated the others. Consequently, those who replaced the colonial power were invariably from the dominant nation.

by
Ana Pararajasingham

Unfortunately, many of these politicians were inclined to consolidate their own positions through advocating chauvinistic ideologies, brute force and the blatant: exploitation of the principle of majortarian rule. Not surprisingly, this gave rise to secessionist wars as the smaller nations encompassed within these states began to assert their right to nationhood.

Sri Lanka is a classic example. It is an Island of two nations-(comprising a numerically larger Sinhala nation and a smaller Tamil nation) which has today become embroiled in a bloody civil war because of the decision of the departing British to grant independence to the Island under a constitution which blatantly favoured the "majority" nation - the Sinhalese.

The wars fought by these "stateless nations" to transform their homelands into fully-fledged states have proved to be a very nasty business indeed.

This is because of the nationalistic sentiments which underpin these struggles.

To the dominant nation the prize is dominance itself, while to the dominated the struggle means their very survival as a distinct people. These struggles therefore are not just about economic prosperity or access to employment. They are essentially about group identity and the group's place in the scheme of things.

There are several reasons for the failure of the International Community to address these conflicts. Firstly, because they are still treated as internal matters.

Secondly, because the International Community has generally acted in such a way as to preserve the status quo by tacitly or otherwise supporting the dominant nations.

Thirdly, because many regard these conflicts to be resolution resistant.

However, there is a growing school of thought which regards these conflicts and the turmoil to be the birth pangs of a new world order, an order no longer dominated by large nation-states, but composed mainly of regional associations of smaller countries.

The solution to these conflicts therefore lies in promoting such a world order. This could be realised only by persuading the dominant nations to re-define their relationships with smaller nations encompassed within the existing state.

Courtesy:
West Australian 6th May 1997

40 years of conflict resolution initiatives analysed

THE ELUSIVE DOVE: An assessment of Conflict Resolution Initiatives in Sri Lanka, 1957 to 1996.
Sachithanandam Sathananthan and Manoranjan Rajasingam. A MANDRU publication . Revised: September 1996.
MANDRU (Institute for Alternative Development and Regional Co-operation), 62/7, Dabare Mawatha, Colombo 05, Sri Lanka.

This publication examines the twenty-three conflict resolution initiatives made within a period of about forty years but, in doing so, it re-presents recent history and undertakes a penetrating analysis of it (see particularly the introductory pages, I - 15).

In an age of sound snatches on radio, newspaper reports superficially written and uncritically consumed, of fleeting pictures on television, in such a time as the present, images and impressions are more potent and lasting than facts. (Indeed, politicians employ, and are guided by, professional 'image makers.') Once formed, it is very difficult to alter false impressions and unjust mental constructs - often held subconsciously - and yet it is imperative that the truth be established, and this last can be accomplished only through a rational, clear telling, and re-telling. (Here I would mention Adrian Wijemanne's War & Peace in Post-Colonial Ceylon, 1948-1991, a rare work of honesty and lonely courage.).

The Sinhala government has captured "the moral high ground" by its numerous and widely publicised conflict resolution initiatives, fastening onto Tamil militant groups in the process, particularly on the LTTE, the image of being violent, unreasonable and intransigent. Sight is misted over; the voice of those whom the government would subordinate, if heard at all, not listened to. *(In the present situation, the use of the term "government" is inaccurate and misleading: it bestows legitimacy and respectability. Those against the government, ipso facto, are assumed to be the enemies of law and order, of decent civic society. So too, the term "minority": the Tamils are a majority in their own homeland, within the Tamil nation.)*

The Elusive Dove examines the nature of the Sinhalese government's initiatives, and explains why they failed: post mortems do not bring corpses back to life, but they are instructive and help to avoid other unnecessary deaths. In short, learning about the past will help us to construct a more sane and just future.

In Britain, "[t]he political concept of citizenship is linked to the individual" (p. 12), in Germany before World War 11, citizenship was based on a German ethnicity, defined by the German language, the Christian religion and the Aryan race. Ceylon, which started out with the British liberal concept, has now metamorphosed into Sri Lanka, and taken the ugly shape of pre-War Germany and of its present day right-wing fanatics and fascists: its "true" citizens are the Sinhalese (race) Buddhists (religion), fondly believed to be of pure Aryan descent.

There was once a Tamil kingdom in Ceylon but it was merged into a unitary state by imperial Britain, as being administratively more convenient and the Tamils, essentially, are engaged in an anti-colonial struggle.

The attempted subordination and inferiorization of the Tamils is evident in several areas: for example, nominally, in the change of name from neutral "Ceylon" to the Sinhala "Sri Lanka", symbolically, in the national (sic) flag with the aggressive, sword-wielding lion (the Sinhalese take their name ffom "Singha", lion), in the enshrining of Buddhism as the foremost religion, and Sinhala as the only Island-wide official language. Entry to universities is on a racial-quota basis (euphemistically known as "standardization") and job opportunities for, and promotion of Tamils severely curtailed. *(The present Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, a Tamil hated by his people and covertly held in contempt by the Sinhalese - a Judas is made use of, but not respected - is an exception paraded to contradict the general truth.*

Tamil efforts to secure justice were for long both constitutional and peaceful, but were met with state orchestrated violence. The younger generation of Tamils watched and learnt and, as the authors say, mice were turned into tigers: Tamil militancy is the creation of Sinhalese racism. It is a sad comment on the human collective that freedom and rights are never given but always wrested, prised off from unkind and unwilling fists.

The Sinhalese government's initiatives foundered because they offered not a genuine devolution of power but a cosmetic decentralization which preserved intact Articles 2 (a unitary state) and 76 (only parliament may formulate laws). So long as these two Articles remain on the statute books, there can be no power sharing and, therefore, no genuine peace initiative. **And so we return to the first paragraph of the present review: the failure of talks is laid on the door of the Tamils, and**

the unknowing world judges them to be unreasonable and violent. Ironically, the victims of violence, those who had pursued peaceful persuasion in vain are now unjustly identified by some as perpetrators of violence.

The ploy of the Sinhalese government is to try and separate the Tamil people from the LTTE, and to say that once the LTTE is defeated, Tamil "grievances" will be addressed. But this promise, in the light of the recent past, is totally dishonest: woe to the vanquished, and the Tamils will then face the victor's arrogance and be subjugated. Sadly, misled by distortion and deceit, some conflict resolution agencies have supported the military campaign against the Tamils (represented by the LTTE), and have thus helped to undermine sustainable democracy in Sri Lanka (p. 15).

The Elusive Dove being a constructive critque, not only analyses and criticises, but shows the way out and forward:

1. Repeal Article 2 to permit the introduction of a federal or confederal system of government.

2. Repeal Article 76 to allow political devolution.

3. Amend Article 18 to declare that "the official languages of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala and Tamil", enforceable throughout the country and without qualification .

4. Amend Article 9 and declare Sri Lanka a secular state.

Anyone interested in or concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka should read The Elusive Dove: its importance cannot be easily overstated.

C . S

Biography of Tamils: A welcome compilation

The long awaited Dictionary of Biography of the Tamils of Ceylon is now released. Priced affordably at £12-50, it is within the purse of most households, and should surely find a place in every family library.

Ths compilation profiles over 775 Ceylon Tamils and spans several centuriss, and is the realisation of a long cherished dream of the veteran author, S. Arumugam, himself over "four scores years and ten".

As an irrigation Engineer in Ceylon for more than two decades, he travelled the length and hreadth of the island and, apart from contributing to the success of countless schemes, gathered valuable information on many eminent Tamils and places of historical and religious interest The Dictionary of Biography is the latest in a seriss of publications such as The Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka, Thiruketheeswam, Koneswaram etc, which emerged as fruits of years of hard work in the Dictionary 's compilation he has been assisted by a group of wise and senior men, notably M Theagarajah and C.J.T. Thamotheram.

The book begins with an introduction of how biographical information is usually presented and this is followed by a brief but fascinating analysis of the occupational trends of Tamils in Ceylon since the Thirteenth century.

Thomas Carlyle (not Carlisle) said - "No great man lives in vain. The history of the word is but the biography of great men". The Dictionary turns out to be a treasure chest of information on great men and women whose lives touched those of many others.

At a time when the long term effects of the diaspora are beginning to be felt and the second generation of Tamils living aborad are rapidly losing touch with their roots, this compilation is a welcome addition to ths efforts of seniors to keep alive in young minds, Tamil consciousness, and a continuing awareness of our ancestry and rich cultural heritage. These efforts, far from causing confusion, should clarify and strengthen the identity of our progeny growing up in multicultural societies.

The Dictionary helps to bridge not only a geographical divide between life in countries of origin and that in a host nation, but also helps to bridge an historical gap - for memories of our ancestors fade away in the abssnce of reminders of their contribution.

The author, in his preface, pointedly appeals to the younger generation "who, bereft of their kinsfolk, would have scant knowledge of their ancestors who were once the prestige of their motherland".

In a compilation like this. in its very first edition, there are bound to be some inaccurices and omissions. Some of the accounts could be worded more concisely. Readers might wonder on what basis names have been included. The relative merits of contributions of individuals included, compared to those who are not, may be debated The author has, with customary humility, asked for views on amendments and additions, and it is hoped that there will be positive response to this. We could soon see a larger and improved version.

Is there scope for an addendum in which there is a classification of those included based on their outstanding contributions in particular spheres - such as Art & Culture, Religion etc., similar to the list of the Kings of Jaffna between 1215 and 1618, seen on page 19? For anyone researching a particular subject this would be very useful. There may be some who would qualify for more than one list, and the author, S. Arumugam is a splendid example.

The mammoth effort that has already gone into this compilation should be recognized and a warm welcome afforded to this book.

Dr. K. Sivakumar

For Copies: phone International Tamil Foundation- 0181- 672 7222

Letters

That open letter to U.S. Ambassador Peter Burleigh

478 Glenferrie Road
Hawthorn,
Victoria 3122,
Australia

The Editor,
"HOT SPRING"
LONDON.

Dear Sir,

1. I read your short Article about Mr Michael Ondaatje and his prize-winning novel "The English Patient"; and I would join the many thousands who congratulate him especially because he is a "part-Tamil"

If Mr Ondaatje can be gifted with a boon from God Almighty to become 'invisible', he can sneak into North-East Sri Lanka without anyone's knowledge and see for himself the atrocities daily occurring there currently, not to mention the inhuman activities of human beings already committed on fellow human beings there.

On his return, Mr Ondaatje will have plenty of material to publish another book. And his book thus written, when sold, would make him a millionaire in no time. Even film producers will clamour to get film rights over his book. The book's contents will afford its readers such surprise, fear and shock that they will read through it over and over again, just to make sure whether man has descended to such low level as depicted in the book, about the events, current and past, North-East Sri Lanka.

God only Knows what the future holds for the Tamil Nation in Sri Lanka!

2. The "Open Letter" to U.S. Ambassador Mr Peter Burleigh by Mr S De Silva is a stunning revelation of the actual situation obtaining in Sri Lanka currently. It would have been a pleasant surprise to the readers that this Article with so many true facts and an unbiassed treatment of the subject was authored by a Sinhalese gentleman.

Mr Silva does not stand alone in feeling that the Tamils deserve to be treated equally and freed from the yoke of oppression. There are hundreds, and perhaps thousands, among the Sinhalese themselves who feel in their hearts that the Tamil nation should be allowed to live with dignity, equality and live independently. Although they feel that way within themselves, they do not come out with their inner feelings because they either do not care to or are too busy to articulate their opinion, or else they are afraid of the State machinery and/or the chauvanistic elements in their midst.

These are the people who should be approached and persuaded to voice their sentiments either in open speeches or through the Press or by representations to State authorties.

What is great of Mr Silva is that, being a Sinhalese himself, he has the courage and openness to come out with the real handicap of the Tamil Nation, citing historial incidents and contemporary facts to support his statements.

We Tamils must win the hearts of the Sinhalese masses in order to achieve our just aspirations. It is the common man in any nation that must help to move the wheel of 'correct action' towards realising the reality - viz., co-existence with other nations, and the ensuing Peace and Prosperity. Every single Sinhalese citizen should be made to read this Mr De Silva's open letter.

I sincerely feel that if the (English-knowing) Sinhalese get a chance to read this (their countryman's) Article, it will give them food for thought. They will think about it themselves and discuss it in private and in public. They may even allay the fears and misrepresentations already instilled into the minds of the Sinhalese public about the Tamils by the Buddhist Clergy and the chauvanistic elements, by arguing with them as to the rights and privileges of the Tamils. The common mass, so enlightened, will be in a position to influence the State towards recognising the aspirations of the Tamils and leaving them alone to manage their own affairs.

Will it be my wishful thinking if I wonder whether it would be feasible to print thousands of copies of this "Open Letter" and freely distribute them in thickly-populated areas in the South? That is, in addition to sending copies to all the media in Sri Lanka and in India.

Thank you very much, dear Editor.

Yours sincerely,
Raja Kadchevy

A 15-year old German girl writes...

Hofatattstr. 3
77731 Willstaff
Germany

Dear Sir,

My name is Alwina Bechthold. I'm 15 and I live in a little village between Karlsruhe and Freiburg. I visit a secondary school in Willstatt (Uosch erosch-Schule).

We had a visitor from Sri Lanka on 15th April '97. The man told us about his home country and showed us photos.

I find it very bad how people treat other people there. In Germany we are people who have got the same rights.. We have got little differences in practising religion, tradition, festivals. But we live together and we are allowed to go to the secondary school or university. It isn't important which kind of religion we have. I feel sorry for the people who live in Sri Lanka and I hope that in a short time the life in Sri Lanka will change.

yours,
Alwina Bechthold

Letters

Sivanandan's book and Andy's review

208 Rothsay Road
London E 7
21.7.97

Dear Sir,

I was delighted to see that Hot Spring devoted so many pages to reviewing *When Memory Dies*. I certainly consider it to be one of the most thought-provoking books on our history to have appeared for many years. It distressed me, however, that your reviewer, who seemed to show a general sensitivity and sensibility to the work, was unable to grasp what I feel is the final message Sivanandan gives us. Your reviewer implies that Sivanandan is ultimately cowardly, unable to face up to current realities and that the book offers no hope to the Tamil people of Eelam. But that ran completely counter to my reading of the book. The final act in *When Memory Dies* is not, as the reviewer would have it, the killing of the male hero Vijay. It is the very significant reaction to that killing from deputy guerrilla-leader, Yogi. Stepping forward to prevent the next killing - of the female hero, low-caste, 'coolie' Meena - he knocks the pistol from the hand of the leader Ravi with the words 'That's enough, I am taking over.' Ravi and Yogi have been shown throughout the story to have two different visions of liberation for their people. One is purely nationalist, the other is also socialist. And that is the crux of the message on which the book ends. Sivanandan is not, as Higginbottom would have it, against Tamil liberation. But he is questioning the nature of that liberation. Patriotism might be enough to galvanise a people into action, but it is not enough with which to build a new society. In an earlier conversation between two key characters the point comes out very clearly. Yogi says he wants to see a socialist Eelam and that it will be achieved when the guerrillas have taken power. Vijay explains that to prevent one tyranny from replacing another, socialist practices have to be part of the liberation process itself, 'Socialism', he says, ' is the path to liberation, not just its end.'

Yours,
Balakrishnan

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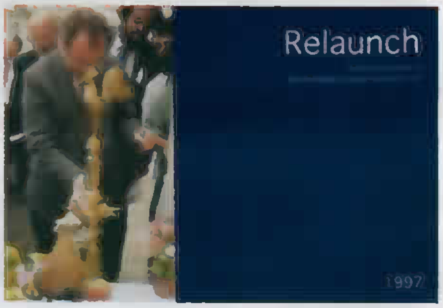
People & Events

Tamil Refugee Housing Association now Tamil Community Housing Association

At a function held on 10th July, the Tamil Refugee Housing Association was re-launched as the Tamil Community Housing Association, in keeping with the expanding role of the organisation, in Britain.

In a goodwill message of support sent to the Manager T.S.Arunan, the Minister of State, Local Government and Housing, Hilary Armstrong said:

" I appreciate the valuable work that Tamil Refugee Housing Association has carried out over the past 11 years. The Association has come a long way since its early beginnings in 1986, when it was set up by active community members. The association is now a strong and positive thinking organisation which provides valuable accommodation and support to Tamil families and single people. I welcome the proposed expansion of the association's role in seeking to respond to the needs of the wider Tamil community, and would like to offer the Tamil Community Association my very best wishes for the future."



Captain K. Chandran MBE, who was honoured by the Queen for his housing work lighted the traditional oil lamp , and Dr.(Mrs.) M.J.K.Sabanathan, Chairperson of TRHA presided.

Speakers on the occasion were S.Sivanayagam, Journalist and Community Leader, Mrs.Rajes Bala, Writer and Community Leader, Mark Lucas, London Borough of Haringey, C.Sithamparapillai, Chair, Tamil Refugee Action Group, Steve Douglas, Chief Executive ASRA, and the Guest Speaker was Duncan Bowie, Assistant Director of Investment, Housing Corporation.

After the resolution of the name change was read out by Mrs.Arnold and approved by the House,the function ended with a vote of thanks by V.E.Cherubim, and a short traditional Tamil dance by small children.

People & Events

Astonishing 57 language speakers at Woodbridge High School !

Bilingual kids are "full of beans" in class and get better results than fellow pupils with just one language, say teachers in the borough's most multi-cultural school. An astonishing 57 varieties of world languages are spoken by pupils at Woodbridge High School

They include FARSI (from Iran and Afghanistan), LINGALA (African) and TAMIL, says Erena Jenkins, reporting for the Ilford & Redbridge Post.

Jeff Cole, language support co-ordinator at the school in St.Barnabas Road, Woodford Green, told the POST: "I think we have such a wide range of languages spoken here because we are on the border of London and we are not part of one specific ethnic community.

"We are very lucky to have so many different cultures here and we try to encourage the children to be proud of their heritage"

Over a quarter of the school's pupils speak more than one language, the most popular being Urdu, Cantonese and Turkish. Any pupil can take a GCSE or A-level in his or her mother tongue and special language lessons are put on outside school hours if there is enough demand. All school signs are in English and the compulsory foreign languages, French and German.

Head teacher Barbara Haigh is pictured here (right) with language support co-ordinators Bridget de Mello and Jeff Cole, and pupils Rhiannon Isaac, 14, Sharon To, 14, Somo Ngimbi, 13, ***Niruja Raveendran, 13,*** Rabia Nasir, 12, Kulvar Singh, 14, and Meral Uluchan, 12.

The Tamil dress that intrigued Prince Charles

At a recently hosted reception (13 July) to mark the 50th anniversary of India and Pakistan's independence, Prince Charles went round meeting the 300 guests, and spoke to them individually at St.James's Palace.

Mr.Victor Cherubim, Secretary of the Committee for Cultural Affairs of the Tamils (CCAT) was one of the invited guests. The Prince noticed the name badge on Mr.Cherubim's dress which identified him as a Tamil.

"Is this your national dress ?", the Prince asked. "Yes, Your Highness", said a surprised Mr.Cherubim.

A lively introduction followed. The Prince was apparently intrigued by the six yards of silk vertie. He wanted to know how it was worn ?

Mr.Cherubim: *"It is worn round the waist"*

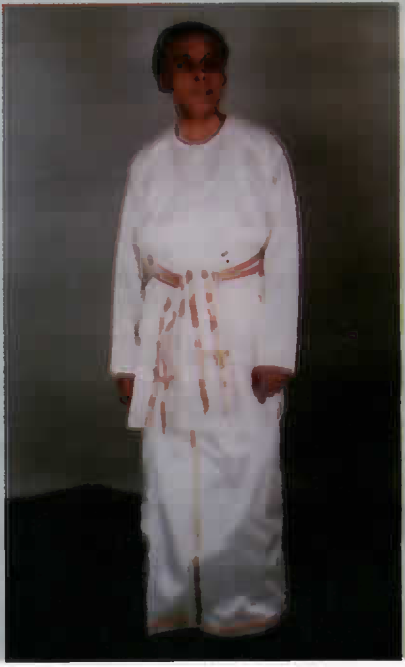
The Prince: *"Are you comfortable ? "*

Mr.Cherubim: *"Yes, most comfortable, Your Highness. But it delicately hangs on a string"*

The Prince: *"May I see the string ?"*

Mr.Cherubim: *"I dare not reveal the string Your Highness, for if the string falls, there is no redemption".*

The Prince was amused and laughed as he moved on to shake the outstretched hand of his next guest.



The Prince left each of his guests in good humour and closed the occasion with an address to his audience remarking how grateful he personally was to the South Asian community in U.K. for their contribution to the improvement of understanding between different ethnic communities around the country.

Leading Tamil school sets the agenda

Tamil School, Kingsbury, held its annual prize-day function on Sunday, 20 July at the Kingsbury High School hall. Many of the items enthusiastically performed by the students reflected the present reality of the Eelam Tamils in their homeland. Dance, drama and music performed by the students were of a high standard and a visitor from Sri Lanka, "Master Sivalingam" of Rupavahini, Colombo was astonished that such items can be performed by students born in this country. He happily told the audience that he was proud to be present at the function which gave him the feeling that he was back home.

The speech of the Chief Guest, Robert Evans, Member of the European Parliament for London North West was very appropriate for the occasion. He said in his speech: "Tamil schools, libraries and places of worship are being destroyed by shelling and bombing and the civilised world cannot allow this to go on.

He added: "I will use every power to make certain we as politicians recognise the rights of Tamils", amidst rapturous applause of the audience who were packed to capacity. He also accused the B.B.C. for not giving adequate and fair coverage to the happenings in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Obituaries

S.V. Rattinam

Sayambunather Vyramuttu Rattinam (75), retired audit officer, Auditor General's Office, Colombo, son of late S.Vyramuttu and late Paruvathipillai of Pannalai, Tellipalai, Jaffna, husband of Sellam, father of Pathmanathan, Ramanathan, and Loganathan, father-in-law of Vahsuki, Vijeyaladchumy, and Thanalechmi, grandfather of Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthooran, Bhavan, Kugan, Asha-Vidthya and Sathian, of U.K., brother of Murugiah, (Colombo), and late Rasammah Ponnampalam, and brother-in- law of Theivanayagi (Colombo), and Swaminathar Ponnampalam, the late V.S.Sangarapillai (Colombo),late V.S.Chelliah (Sydney), V.S.Sinnatham by (Vavuniya), and V.S.Subramaniam (Colombo), uncle of Swaminathar, Sivanathan, Paramanathan of Canada, Rajasothy Vadivel of Chunnakam, Suthaharan (U.K.), Krishnabhavani and Sathiyadevi of Colombo, passed away in U.K. on 9th July. Cremated on 13th July in the U.K. according to Hindu rites.

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* * * * *

Mrs.T.Kathiravelu

Thaiyalnayaki, wife of P.Kathiravelu, Attorney-at-law, daughter of late Ponniapillai and Sivakamipillai of Pungudutivu, mother of Gangakumaran (Engineer, U.K.), and Dr.Sivakumaran (Australia), and mother-in-law of Vasanthi (U.K.) and Rajeswary (Australia). Cremation Kanatte Hindu section on 20th July.

* * * * *

N. Sivarajah

Nadarajah Sivarajah, of Maniagar Lane, Kokuvil East, onetime teacher, Kokuvil Hindu College, later retired VicePrincipal, Nadeswara College, and Asst. Teacher Belivor College International, youngest son of the late Nadarajah and Puvaneswary, passed away in Colombo on 17th July. He was the brother of Arunthathy, Sivasubramaniam (retired General Manager, Ceylon Transport Board)and the late Kumarakulasingham, husband of Sathiawathy , headmistress, Thavady Hindu Tamil School, father of Jayanthan (Jaffna University), and Thushyanthi, Cremated at Kanatte crematorium on 20 July. C.Jayanthan,

115/4, W.A.Silva Mawatha, Colombo 6.

* * * *

S.Singarayar

Sivagnanarajah Singarayar, retired Sub-Manager, Bank of Ceylon, native of Puttur, Jaffna, later resident of Chempian Lane, Kokuvil East, and Fairline Road, Dehiwala, husband of Rukmani ammal,father of Thevasigamany, Uthayakumari (Canada) and Kokila, (Teacher, Colombo Hindu College, Ratmalana, and father-in-law of Somaseelan (Canada). Cremated 20th July,Kanatte.

* * * *

S. Veerasingham

Subramaniam Veerasingham, former proprietor of Puvaneswary Medical Stores, Jaffna, husband of late Sivapackialedchumy, father of Pathmasany (Jaffna), Yoganathan (Canada), Ulaganathan (Canada), Rajeswary (Germany), Paramanathan (Canada) Tharumanathan (Germany), Ketharanathan (France), Thevamalar (Canada),Puvaneswary (France) and Paramagurunathan (London). Cremation Jaffna on 20th Julv.

* * * *

Dr. J.J.M. Manogaran,M.D

The death occurred under tragic circumstances in the U.S. on 19 June of Dr.James Joseph Mary Manoharan, son of the late A.S.James, former Headmaster, St.Henry's College, Ilavalai and late Regina, husband of Patricia, father of Marilyn, James, Sha'Lorena, Joseph and Joshua, and brother of Manoranjitham, Manohary, Manohararajah, Sayanthekumaran and Vasanthy, brotherin-law of T.P.Jesuratnam, P.A.Mariathas, Shanthy and Arul, Funeral took place in Grand Blank, Michigan, U.S.A. on 25th June.

* * * *

G.L. Saravanamuttu

Gunasingham Logathasan Saravanamuttu, son of K.S.Saravanamuttu, former Principal of Drieberg College, Chavakachcheri, passed away peacefully on 30th June at St.Helier Hospital, Carshalton U.K., aged 71.

Educated at Drieberg College, Jaffna College, and at the University of Allahabad, India, he worked for some years in the Ministry of Agriculture in Peradeniya, before leaving the country to work in Ghana, West Africa. He subsequently joined the Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations working in Northern Nigeria and then in its headquarters in Rome, from where he retired. His last years were spent in the U.K. He is survived by his wife Leela, two sons, Ravi and Ram, and daughter Lakshmi, presently in Montreal.

* * * *

K. Balendran

K.Kunchu Balendran, formerly of Mackwoods and Ceylon Tobacco, son of late Mr and Mrs. Kanagarajah of Kotahena, husband of Thangapoovathy (Teacher, Jaffna) and father of Suhanya (Student, Chundikuli Girls' College, Jaffna). Cremated on 8th July.

* * * * *

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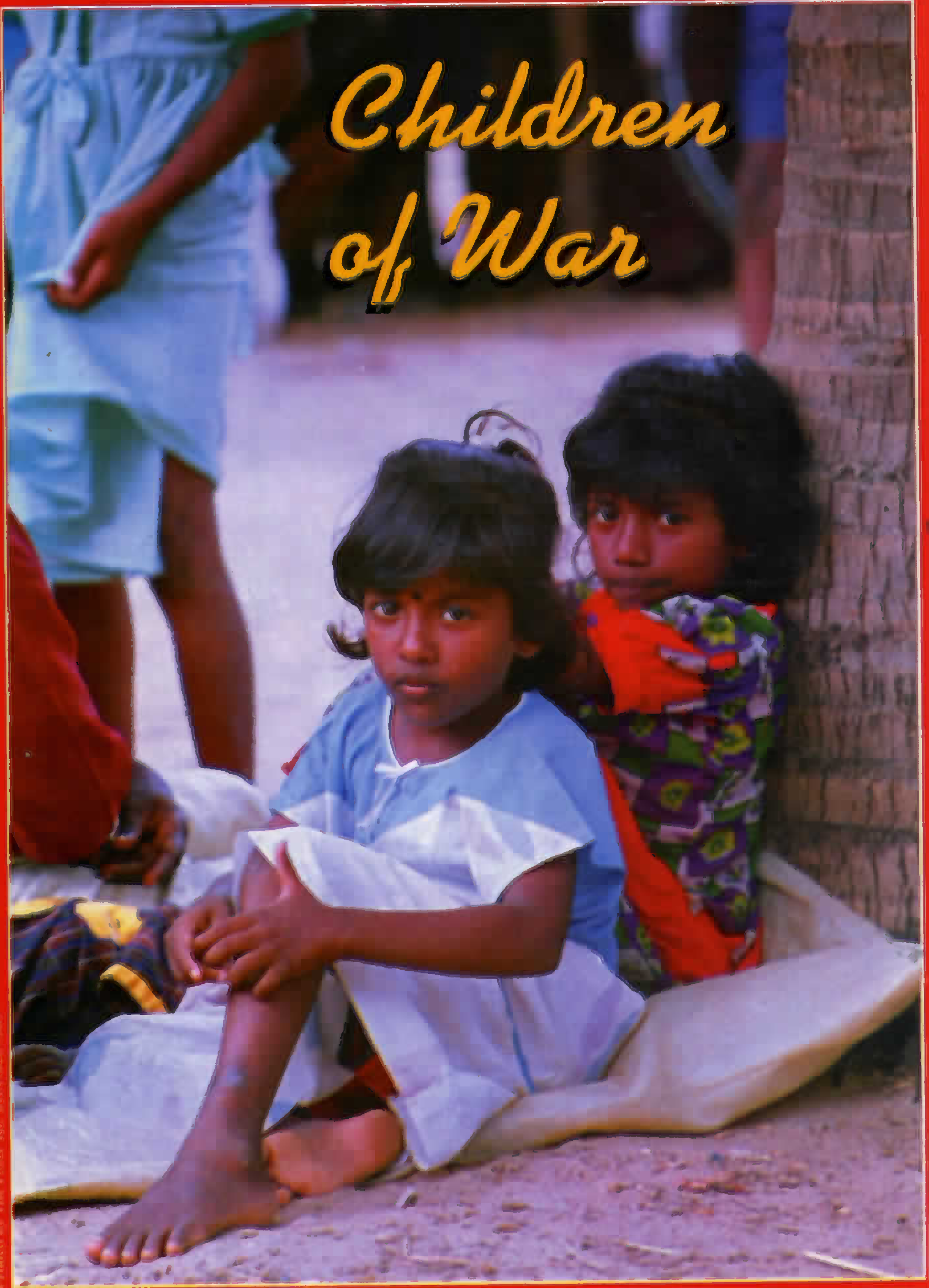
Children of War



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